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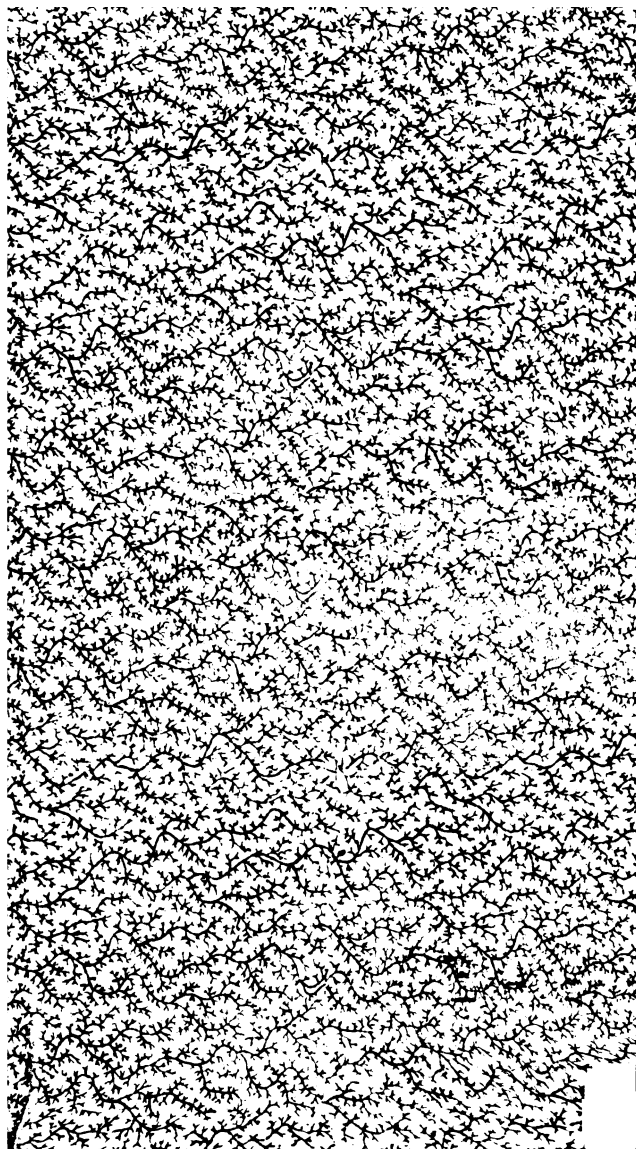


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THE
BRITISH NOVELISTS;

WITH AN
ESSAY, AND PREFACES

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL,

BY

MRS. BARBAULD.

A New Edition.

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THE
HISTORY
OF
LADY JULIA MANDEVILLE.

BY THE TRANSLATOR OF
LADY CATESBY'S LETTERS.

Frances Brooke

NATURE AND ART.

BY
Frances Brooke
MRS. INCHBALD.

A NEW EDITION,
WITH THE LAST CORRECTIONS BY THE AUTHOR.



1907
1908
1909
1910

MRS. BROOKE.

FRANCES BROOKE, whose maiden name was Moore, an elegant and accomplished woman, was the wife of a clergyman. She had at one time a share in the management of the Opera House. Her publications are numerous. She wrote a periodical paper entitled *The Old Maid*, and some pieces for the theatre. She translated *Lady Catesby's Letters* from the French, and several other works. The two novels by which she is best known are *Emily Montague* and *Lady Julia Mandeville*. The latter is a simple well connected story, told with elegance and strong effect. It is a forcible appeal to the feelings against the savage practice of duelling. *Emily Montague* is less interesting in the story, which serves but as a thread to connect a great deal of beautiful description of the manners and scenery of Canada, which country the author had visited. Mrs. Brooke was perhaps the first female novel-writer who attained a perfect purity and polish of style. The whole is correct and easy, and many passages are highly beautiful.

What can be more animated than the description of the breaking up of the vast body of ice which forms what is called the *bridge*, from Quebec to Point Levi? "The ice before the town being five feet thick, a league in length,

and more than a mile broad, resists for a long time the rapid tide that attempts to force it from the banks. At length," she says, "the hour is come. I have been with a crowd of both sexes and all ranks, hailing the propitious moment. Our situation on the top of Cape Diamond gave us a prospect some leagues above and below the town. Above Cape Diamond the river was open; it was so below Point Levi, the rapidity of the current having forced a passage for the water under the transparent bridge, which for more than a league continued firm. We stood waiting with all the eagerness of expectation; the tide came rushing in with amazing impetuosity; the bridge seemed to shake, yet resisted the force of the waters; the tide recoiled, it made a pause, it stood still, it returned with a redoubled fury, the immense mass of ice gave way. A vast plain appeared in motion; it advanced with solemn and majestic pace; the points of land on the banks of the river for a few moments stopped its progress; but the immense weight of so prodigious a body, carried along by a rapid current, bore down all opposition with a force irresistible."

The manners of the Canadians are equally well described: and this lady's account both of the climate and the people corresponds to the favourable impression which other travellers give us, both of the country and the inhabitants; the climate healthy and pleasant, though cold, and the inhabitants preserving so near the pole the gaiety and urbanity of their native France, This lady died in 1789.

THE
HISTORY
OF
LADY JULIA MANDEVILLE.

TO GEORGE MORDAUNT, ESQ.

Belmont House, July 3, 1762.

I AM, indeed, my dear George, the most happy of human beings ! happy in the paternal regard of the best of parents, the sincere esteem of my worthy relations Lord and Lady Belmont, and the friendship, the tender friendship of their lovely daughter, the amiable Lady Julia. An increase of fortune, which you are kind enough to wish me, might perhaps add something to my felicity, but is far from being necessary to constitute it : nor did it ever excite in my bosom an anxious wish. My father, though he educated me to become the most splendid situation, yet instructed me to be satisfied with my own moderate one : he taught me, that independence was all a generous mind required ; and that virtue, adorned by that liberal education his unsparing bounty lavished on me, would command through life that heart-felt esteem from the worthy

of every rank, which the most exorbitant wealth alone could never procure its possessors. Other parents hoard up riches for their children; mine, with a more noble, more enlightened solicitude, expended his in storing my mind with generous sentiments and useful knowledge, to which his unbounded goodness added every outward accomplishment that could give grace to virtue, and set her charms in the fairest light.

Shall I then murmur because I was not born to affluence? No, believe me, I would not be the son of any other than this most excellent of men, to inherit all the stores which avarice and ambition sigh for. I am prouder of a father, to whose discerning wisdom and generous expanded heart I am so obliged, than I should be of one whom I was to succeed in all the titles and possessions in the power of fortune to bestow. From him I receive, and learn properly to value, the most real of all treasures, independence and content.

What a divine morning! how lovely is the face of nature! the blue serene of Italy, with the lively verdure of England! But behold a more charming object than nature herself! the sweet, the young, the blooming Lady Julia, who is this instant stepping into her post-chaise with Lady Anne Wilmot! How unspeakably lovely! She looks up to the window: she smiles. I understand that smile: she permits me to have the honour of following her. I'll order my horses; and, whilst they are getting ready, endeavour to describe this most angelic of woman-kind.

Lady Julia then, who wants only three months of nineteen, is exactly what a poet or painter would wish to copy, who intended to personify the idea of female softness. Her whole form is delicate and feminine to the utmost degree: her complexion is fair, enlivened by the bloom of youth, and often

diversified by blushes more beautiful than those of the morning : her features are regular ; her mouth and teeth particularly lovely ; her hair light brown ; her eyes blue, full of softness, and strongly expressive of the exquisite sensibility of her soul. Her countenance, the beauteous abode of the Loves and the Smiles, has a mixture of sweetness and spirit, which gives life and expression to her charms.

As her mind has been adorned, not warped, by education, it is just what her appearance promises ; artless, gentle, timid, soft, sincere, compassionate ; awake to all the finer impressions of tenderness, and melting with pity for every human woe.

But my horses are in the court ; and even this subject cannot detain me a moment longer. Adieu !

H. MANDEVILLE.

TO GEORGE MORDAUNT, ESQ.

YOUR raillery, my dear Mordaunt, gives me pain. That I have the tenderest attachment to Lady Julia, is certain ; but it is an attachment which has not the least resemblance to love. I should be the most ungrateful of mankind to make so ill a return to the friendship Lord Belmont honours me with, and the most selfish to entertain a wish so much to Lady Julia's disadvantage. My birth, it must be confessed, is not unworthy even her, since the same blood fills our veins ; my father being descended from the eldest brother of the first Earl of Belmont, great grandfather of the present : but it would ill become a man whose whole expectations are limited to the inheritance of seven hundred pounds a year (long, very long, may it be before the greatest of all

misfortunes makes even that little mine !) to aspire to the heiress of twice as many thousands.

What I feel for this most charming of women is, the tenderness of a relation, mixed with that soft and lively esteem, which it is impossible to refuse to the finest understanding and noblest mind in the world, lodged in a form almost celestial.

Love, for I have tasted its poisoned cup, is all tumult, disorder, madness : but my friendship for Lady Julia, warm and animated as it is, is calm, tranquil, gentle ; productive of a thousand innocent pleasures, but a stranger to every kind of inquietude : it does not even disturb my rest, a certain consequence of love, even in its earliest approaches.

Having thus vindicated myself from all suspicion of a passion, which in the present situation of my fortune I should think almost a criminal one, I proceed to obey you in giving you the portraits of my noble friends ; though, I assure you, my sketches will be very imperfect ones.

Lord Belmont, who lives eight months of the year at this charming seat, with all the magnificence and hospitality of our ancient English nobility, is about sixty years old : his person is tall, well made, graceful ; his air commanding, and full of dignity : he has strong sense, with a competent share of learning, and a just and delicate taste for the fine arts ; especially music, which he studied in Italy, under the best masters that region of harmony afforded. His politeness is equally the result of a natural desire of obliging, and an early and extensive acquaintance with the great world.

A liberality which scarce his ample possessions can bound, a paternal care of all placed by Providence under his protection, a glowing zeal for the liberty, prosperity, and honour of his country, the

noblest spirit of independence, with the most animated attachment and firmest loyalty to his accomplished sovereign, are traits too strongly marked to escape the most careless observer : but those only who are admitted to his nearest intimacy are judges of his domestic virtues, or see in full light the tender, the polite, attentive husband, the fond indulgent parent, the warm, unwearied friend.

If there is a shade in this picture, it is a prejudice, perhaps rather too strong, in favour of birth, and a slowness to expect very exalted virtues in any man who cannot trace his ancestors as far back, at least, as the Conquest.

Lady Belmont, who is about six years younger than her lord, with all the strength of reason and steadiness of mind generally confined to the best of our sex, has all the winning softness becoming the most amiable of her own—gentle, affable, social, polite, she joins the graces of a court to the simplicity of a cottage ; and, by an inexpressible ease and sweetness in her address, makes all who approach her happy. Impartial in her politeness, at her genial board no invidious distinctions take place, no cold regards damp the heart of an inferior. By a peculiar delicacy of good breeding and engaging attention to every individual, she banishes reserve, and diffuses a spirit of convivial joy around her. Encouraged by her notice, the timid lose their diffidence in her presence ; and often, surprised, exert talents of pleasing they were before themselves unconscious of possessing.

The best and most beloved of wives, of mothers, of mistresses, her domestic character is most lovely : indeed all her virtues are rendered doubly charming, by a certain grace, a delicate finishing, which it is much easier to feel than to describe.

The economy of her house, which she does not

disdain herself to direct, is magnificent without profusion, and regular without constraint. The effects of her cares appear, the cause is unobserved; all wears the smiling easy air of chance, though conducted with the most admirable order.

Her form is perfectly elegant; and her countenance, without having ever been beautiful, has a benignity in it more engaging than beauty itself.

Lady Anne Wilmot, my father, and myself, make up the present party at Belmont. Lady Anne, who without regularity of features has that animation which is the soul of beauty, is the widow of a very rich country gentleman; if it be just to prostitute the name of gentleman to beings of his order, only because they have estates of which they are unworthy, and are descended from ancestors whom they dishonour: who, when riding post through Europe, happened to see her with her father at Turin; and, as she was the handsomest English woman there, and the whim of being married just then seized him, asked her of Lord —, who could not refuse his daughter to a jointure of three thousand pounds a-year. She returned soon to England with her husband, where, during four years, she enjoyed the happiness of listening to the interesting histories of the chase, and entertaining the —shire hunt at dinner; her slumbers broken by the noise of hounds in a morning, and the riotous mirth of less rational animals at night. Fortune, however, at length took pity on her sufferings; and the good squire, overheating himself at a fox-chase, of which a fever was the consequence, left her young and rich, at full liberty to return to the cheerful haunts of men, with no very high ideas of matrimonial felicity, and an abhorrence of a country life, which nothing but her friendship for Lady Belmont could have one moment suspended.

A great flow of animal spirits, and a French education, have made her a coquette, though intended by nature for a much superior character. She is elegant in her dress, equipage, and manner of living, and rather profuse in her expences. I had first the honour of knowing her last winter at Paris, from whence she has been returned about six weeks, three of which she has passed at Belmont.

Nothing can be more easy or agreeable than the manner of living here: it is perfectly domestic, yet so diversified with amusements, as to exclude that satiety from which the best and purest of sublunary enjoyments are not secure, if continued in too uniform a course. We read, we write, we converse; we play, we dance, we sing; join the company, or indulge in pensive solitude and meditation, just as fancy leads. Liberty, restrained alone by virtue and politeness, is the law, and inclination the sovereign guide, at this mansion of true hospitality. Free from all the shackles of idle ceremony, the whole business of Lord Belmont's guests, and the highest satisfaction they can give their noble host, is to be happy, and to consult their own taste entirely in their manner of being so.

Reading, music, riding, and conversation, are Lord Belmont's favourite pleasures, but none that are innocent are excluded: balls, plays, concerts, cards, bowls, billiards, and parties of pleasure round the neighbouring country, relieve each other; and, whilst their variety prevents any of them from satiating, all conspire to give a double poignancy to the sweeter joys of domestic life, the calm and tender hours which this charming family devote to the endearing conversation of each other, and of those friends particularly honoured with their esteem.

The house, which is the work of Inigo Jones, is magnificent to the utmost degree. It stands on the

summit of a slowly-rising hill, facing the south ; and, beyond a spacious court, has in front an avenue of the tallest trees, which lets in the prospect of a fruitful valley, bounded at a distance by a mountain, down the sides of which rushes a foaming cascade, which spreads into a thousand meandering streams in the vale below.

The gardens and park, which are behind the house, are romantic beyond the wantonness of imagination ; and the whole adjoining country diversified with hills, valleys, woods, rivers, plains, and every charm of lovely unadorned nature.

Here Lord Belmont enjoys the most unmixed and lively of all human pleasures, that of making others happy. His estate conveys the strongest idea of the patriarchal government : he seems a beneficent father surrounded by his children, over whom reverence, gratitude, and love, give him an absolute authority, which he never exerts but for their good : every eye shines with transport at his sight ; parents point him out to their children ; the first accents of prattling infancy are taught to lisp his honoured name ; and age, supported by his bounteous hand, pours out the fervent prayer to Heaven for its benefactor.

To a life like this, and to an ardent love of independence, Lord Belmont sacrifices all the anxious and corroding cares of avarice and ambition ; and finds his account in health, freedom, cheerfulness, and “ that sweet peace which goodness bosoms ever.” Adieu ! I am going with Lord Belmont and my father to Acton-grange, and shall not return till Thursday.

H. MANDEVILLE.

TO GEORGE MORDAUNT, ESQ.

Friday.

WE returned yesterday, about six in the evening; and the moment we alighted, my lord leading us into the garden, an unexpected scene opened on my view, which recalled the idea of the fabulous pleasures of the golden age, and could not but be infinitely pleasing to every mind uncorrupted by the false glare of tinsel pomp, and awake to the genuine charms of simplicity and nature.

On a spacious lawn, bounded on every side by a profusion of the most odoriferous flowering shrubs, a joyous band of villagers were assembled: the young men, drest in green, youth, health, and pleasure in their air, led up their artless charmers, in straw hats adorned with the spoils of Flora, to the rustic sound of the tabor and pipe. Round the lawn, at equal intervals, were raised temporary arbours of branches of trees, in which refreshments were prepared for the dancers: and between the arbours, seats of moss for their parents, shaded from the sun by green awnings on poles, round which were twined wreaths of flowers, breathing the sweets of the spring. The surprise, the gaiety of the scene, the flow of general joy, the sight of so many happy people, the countenances of the enraptured parents who seemed to live over again the sprightly season of youth in their children, with the benevolent pleasure in the looks of the noble bestowers of the feast, filled my eyes with tears, and my swelling heart with a sensation of pure yet lively transport, to which the joys of courtly balls are mean.

The ladies, who were sitting in conversation with some of the oldest of the villagers, rose at our approach; and, my lord giving Lady Anne Wilmo's

hand to my father, and honouring me with Lady Julia's, we mixed in the rustic ball. The loveliest of women had an elegant simplicity in her air and habit, which became the scene, and gave her a thousand new charms: she was drest in a straw-coloured lustring night-gown, the lightest gauze linen, a hat with purple ribands, and a sprig of glowing purple amaranthus in her bosom. I know not how to convey an idea of the particular style of beauty in which she then appeared. Youth, health, sprightliness, and innocence, all struck the imagination at once. Paint to yourself the exquisite proportion, the playful air, and easy movement of a Venus, with the vivid bloom of an Hebe; however high you raise your ideas, they will fall infinitely short of the divine original.

The approach of night putting an end to the rural assembly, the villagers retired to the hall, where they continued dancing, and our happy party passed the rest of the evening in that sweet and lively conversation, which is never to be found but amongst those of the first sense and politeness, united by that perfect confidence which makes the most trifling subjects interesting. None of us thought of separating, or imagined it midnight, when, my father opening a window, the rising sun broke in upon us, and convinced us on what swift and downy pinions the hours of happiness flit away. Adieu!

H. MANDEVILLE.

TO GEORGE MORDAUNT, ESQ.

Belmont.

No, my friend, I have not always been this hero: too sensible to the power of beauty, I have felt the

keenest pangs of unsuccessful love : but I deserved to suffer ; my passion was in the highest degree criminal ; and I blush, though at this distance of time, to lay open my heart even to the indulgent eyes of partial friendship.

When your father's death called you back to England, you may remember I continued my journey to Rome ; where a letter from my father introduced me into the family of Count Melespini, a nobleman of great wealth and uncommon accomplishments. As my father, who has always been of opinion that nothing purifies the heart, refines the taste, or polishes the manners, like the conversation of an amiable, well-educated, virtuous woman, had particularly entreated for me the honour of the countess's friendship, whom he had known almost a child, and to whom he had taught the English language, I was admitted to the distinction of partaking in all her amusements, and attending her every where in the quality of *cécisbeo*. To the arts of the libertine, however fair, my heart had always been steeled ; but the countess joined the most piercing wit, the most winning politeness, the most engaging sensibility, the most exquisite delicacy, to a form perfectly lovely. You will not therefore wonder that the warmth and inexperience of youth, hourly exposed in so dangerous a situation, was unable to resist such variety of attractions. Charmed with the flattering preference she seemed to give me, my vanity fed by the notice of so accomplished a creature, forgetting those sentiments of honour which ought never to be one moment suspended, I became passionately in love with this charming woman : for some months I struggled with my love ; till, on her observing that my health seemed impaired, and that I had lost my usual vivacity, I took courage to confess the cause, though in terms which

sufficiently spoke my despair of touching a heart which I feared was too sensible to virtue for my happiness : I implored her pity, and protested I had no hope of inspiring a tenderer sentiment. Whilst I was speaking, which was in broken interrupted sentences, the countess looked at me with the strongest sorrow and compassion painted in her eyes : she was for some moments silent, and seemed lost in thought : but at last, with an air of dignified sweetness, “ My dear Enrico,” said she, “ shall I own to you that I have for some time feared this confession? I ought, perhaps, to resent this declaration, which from another I could never have forgiven: but, as I know and esteem the goodness of your heart, as I respect your father infinitely, and love you with the innocent tenderness of a sister, I will only entreat you to reflect how injurious this passion is to the count, who has the tenderest esteem for you, and would sacrifice almost his life for your happiness : be assured of my eternal friendship, unless you forfeit it by persisting in a pursuit equally destructive to your own probity and my honour. Receive the tenderest assurances of it,” continued she, giving me her hand to kiss; “ but believe, at the same time, that the count deserves and possesses all my love—I had almost said, my adoration. The fondest affection united us; and time, instead of lessening, every hour increases our mutual passion. Reserve your heart, my good Enrico, for some amiable lady of your own nation ; and believe that love has no true pleasures but when it keeps within the bounds of honour.”

It is impossible, my dear Mordaunt, to express to you the shame this discourse filled me with : her gentle, her affectionate reproofs, the generous concern she shewed for my error, the mild dignity of her aspect, plunged me into inexpressible confusion,

and showed my fault in its blackest colours; at the same time that her behaviour, by increasing my esteem, added to the excess of my passion. I attempted to answer her; but it was impossible: awed, abashed, humbled before her, I had not courage even to meet her eyes: like the fallen angel in Milton, I felt

—“How awful goodness is, and saw
Virtue in her own shape how lovely.”

The countess saw and pitied my confusion, and generously relieved me from it by changing the subject: she talked of my father, of his merit, his tenderness for me, and expectations of my conduct; which she was sure I should never disappoint. Without hinting at what had passed, she with the most exquisite delicacy gave me to understand it would be best I should leave Rome; by saying she knew how ardently my father wished for my return, and that it would be the height of cruelty longer to deprive him of the pleasure of seeing a son so worthy of his affection. “The count and myself,” pursued she, “cannot lose you without inexpressible regret; but you will alleviate it by letting us hear often of your welfare. When you are united to a lady worthy of you, my dear Enrico, we may perhaps make you a visit in England: in the mean time, be assured you have not two friends who love you with a sincerer affection.”

At this moment the count entered, who, seeing my eyes filled with tears of love, despair, and admiration, with the tenderest anxiety inquired the cause. “I shall tell you news which will afflict you, my lord,” said the countess: “Signor Enrico comes to bid us farewell: he is commanded by his father to

return to England : to-morrow is the last day of his stay in Rome. He promises to write to us, and to preserve an eternal remembrance of our friendship, for which he is obliged only to his own merit : his tender heart, full of the most laudable, the most engaging sensibility, melts at the idea of a separation, which will not be less painful to us."

The count, after expressing the most obliging concern at the thought of losing me, and the warmest gratitude for these supposed marks of my friendship, insisted on my spending the rest of the day with them. I consented, but begged first to return to my lodgings, on pretence of giving some necessary orders, but in reality to give vent to my full heart, torn with a thousand contrary emotions, amongst which, I am shocked to own, hatred to the generous count was not the weakest. I threw myself on the ground, in an agony of despair : I wept : I called Heaven to witness the purity of my love : I accused the countess of cruelty in thus forcing me from Rome. I rose up ; I began a letter to her, in which I vowed an eternal silence and respect, but begged she would allow me still the innocent pleasure of beholding her ; swore I could not live without seeing her, and that the day of my leaving Rome would be that of my death.—But why do I thus tear open wounds which are but just healed ? Let it suffice, that a moment's reflection convinced me of my madness, and showed the charming countess in the light of a guardian angel snatching me from the edge of a precipice. My reason in some degree returning, I drest myself with the most studious care, and returned to the Melespini palace, where I found the Abbate Camilli, a near relation of the family, whose presence saved me the confusion of being the third with my injured friends, and whose lively con-

versation soon dissipated the air of constraint I felt on entering the room, and even dispelled part of my melancholy.

The count, whose own probity and virtue set him far above suspecting mine, pressed me, with all the earnestness of a friendship I so little merited, to defer my journey a week : on which I raised my downcast eyes to Madam Melespini ; for such influence had this lovely woman over my heart, I did not dare to consent till certain of her permission ; and, reading approbation in a smile of condescending sweetness, I consented with a transport which only those who have looked like me can conceive. My cheerfulness returning, and some of the most amiable people in Rome coming in, we passed the evening in the utmost gaiety. At taking leave, I was engaged to the same company in different parties of amusement for the whole time I had to stay, and had the joy of being every day with the countess ; though I never found an opportunity of speaking to her without witnesses till the evening before I left Rome, when, going to her house an hour sooner than I was expected, I found her alone in her closet. When I approached her, my voice faltered ; I trembled ; I wanted power to address her : and this moment, sought with such care, wished with such ardour, was the most painful of my life. Shame alone prevented my retiring : my eyes were involuntarily turned towards the door at which I entered, in a vain hope of that interruption I had before dreaded as the greatest misfortune ; and even the presence of my happy envied rival would at that moment have been most welcome.

The countess seemed little less disconcerted than myself : however, recovering herself sooner, " Signor Enrico," said she, " your discretion charms me : it is absolutely necessary you should leave Rome : it

has already cost me an artifice unworthy of my character, to conceal from the count a secret which would have wounded his nice honour, and destroyed his friendship for you. After this adored husband, be assured, you stand first of all your sex in my esteem. The sensibility of your heart, though at present so unhappily misplaced, increases my good opinion of you. May you, my dear Enrico, meet with an English lady worthy of your tenderness, and be as happy in marriage as the friends you leave behind. Accept," pursued she, rising and going to a cabinet, "these miniatures of the count and myself, which I give you by his command; and when you look on them, believe they represent two faithful friends, whose esteem for you neither time nor absence can lessen."

I took the pictures eagerly, and kissed that of the countess with a passion I could not restrain; of which, however, she took not the least notice. I thanked her, with a confused air, for so invaluable a present; and entreated her to pity a friendship too tender for my peace, but as respectful and as pure as she herself could wish it.

The Abbate Camilli here joined us, and once more saved me a scene too interesting for the present situation of my heart. The count entered the room soon after, and our conversation turned on the other cities of Italy which I intended visiting; to most of which he gave me letters of recommendation to the noblest families, written in terms so polite and affectionate as stabbed me to the heart with a sense of my own ingratitude. He did me the honour to accept my picture, which I had not the courage to offer the countess. After protracting till morning a parting so exquisitely painful, I tore myself from all I loved; and, bathing with tears her hand which I pressed eagerly to my lips, threw myself into my

chaise, and, without going to bed, took the road to Naples. But how difficult was this conquest! how often was I tempted to return to Rome, and throw myself at the countess's feet, without considering the consequences of so wild an action! You, my dearest Mordaunt, whose discerning spirit knows all the windings, the strange inconsistencies, of the human heart, will pity rather than blame your friend, when he owns there were moments in which he formed the infamous resolution of carrying her off by force.

But, when the mist of passion a little dispersed, I began to entertain more worthy sentiments: I determined to drive this lovely woman from my heart, and conquer an inclination which the count's generous unsuspecting friendship would have made criminal, even in the eyes of the most abandoned libertine: rather owing this resolution, however, to an absolute despair of success than either to reason or a sense of honour, my cure was a work of time. I was so weak during some months, as to confine my visits to the families where the count's letters introduced me, that I might indulge my passion by hearing the lovely countess continually mentioned.

Convinced at length of the folly of thus feeding so hopeless a flame, I resolved to avoid every place where I had a chance of hearing that adored name. I left Italy for France, where I hoped a life of dissipation would drive her for ever from my remembrance. I even profaned my passion for her, by meeting the advances of a coquette; but disgust succeeded my conquest, and I found it was from time alone I must hope a cure.

I had been near a year at Paris, when, in April last, I received a letter from my father, who pressed my return, and appointed me to meet him immediately at the Hague, from whence we returned together; and, after a few days' stay in London,

came down to Belmont, where the charms of Lady Julia's conversation, and the esteem she honours me with, entirely completed my cure, which time, absence, and the count's tender and affectionate letters had very far advanced. There is a sweetness in her friendship, my dear Mordaunt, to which love itself must yield the palm; the delicacy, yet vicacity of her sentiments; the soft sensibility of her heart, which without fear listens to vows of eternal amity and esteem.—O, Mordaunt! I must not, I do not hope for, I do not indeed wish for, her love; but can it be possible there is a man on earth to whom Heaven destines such a blessing?

H. MANDEVILLE.

TO COLONEL BELVILLE.

Tuesday, Belmont.

OH! you have no notion what a reformation! Who but Lady Anne Wilmot at chapel every Sunday! grave, devout, attentive! scarce stealing a look at the prettiest fellow in the world, who sits close by me! Yes, you are undone, Belville: Harry Mandeville, the young, the gay, the lovely Harry Mandeville, in the full bloom of conquering three-and-twenty, with all the fire and sprightliness of youth, the exquisite symmetry and easy grace of an Antinous; a countenance open, manly, animated; his hair the brightest chesnut; his complexion brown, flushed with the rose of health; his eyes dark, penetrating, and full of fire; but when he addresses our sex, softened into a sweetness which is almost irresistible; his nose inclining to the aquiline; his lips full and red, and his teeth of the most pearly whiteness.

There, read and die with envy ;

“ You with envy, I with love.”

Fond of me too, but afraid to declare his passion ; respectful—awed by the commanding dignity of my manner—poor dear creature ! I think I must unbend a little, hide half the rays of my divinity, to encourage so timid a worshipper.

“ Some flattering tawdry coxcomb, I suppose ; some fool with a tolerable outside.”

No, you never was more mistaken, Belville : his charms, I assure you are not all external. His understanding is of the most exalted kind, and has been improved by a very extraordinary education, in projecting which his father has employed much time and thought, and half ruined himself by carrying it into execution. Above all, the colonel has cultivated in his son an ardent love of independence, not quite so well suited to his fortune ; and a generous, perhaps a romantic, contempt of riches, which most parents, if they had found, would have eradicated with the utmost care. His heart is warm, noble, liberal, benevolent : sincere and violent in his friendships, he is not less so, though extremely placable, in his enmities : scorning disguise, and laying his faults as well as his virtues open to every eye : rash, romantic, imprudent ; haughty to the assuming sons of wealth, but to those below him

“ Gentle

As zephyr blowing underneath the violet.”

But whither am I running ? and where was I when this divine creature seduced me from my right path ? Oh, I remember, at chapel : it must be acknowledged my digressions are a little Pindaric ! True, as I was saying, I go constantly to chapel.

'Tis strange ; but this Lady Belmont has the most unaccountable way in the world of making it one's choice to do whatever she has an inclination one should, without seeming to desire it. One sees so clearly that all she does is right, religion sits so easy upon her, her style of goodness is so becoming and graceful, that it seems want of taste and elegance not to endeavour to resemble her. Then my lord too loves to worship in the beauty of holiness ; he makes the fine arts subservient to the noblest purpose, and spends as much on serving his Creator as some people of his rank do on a kennel of hounds. We have every external incitement to devotion ; exquisite paintings, an admirable organ, fine voices, and the most animated reader of prayers in the universe.

Colonel Mandeville, whom I should be extremely in love with, if his son was not five-and-twenty years younger, leaves us to-morrow morning, to join his regiment, the ——shire militia. He served in the late war with honour ; but, meeting with some ill usage from a minister on account of a vote in parliament, he resigned his commission, and gave up his whole time to the education of my lovely Harry, whose tenderness and merit are a full reward for all his generous attention. Adieu !

A. WILMOT.

TO COLONEL BELVILLE.

Belmont, Thursday.

IL divino Enrico is a little in the *penseroso*. Poor Harry ? I am charmed with his sensibility ; he has scarce been himself since he parted with his father yesterday. He apologises for his chagrin ; but says,

no man on earth has such obligations to a parent. *Entre nous*, I fancy I know some few sons who would be of a different way of thinking! The colonel has literally governed his conduct by the old adage, that "Learning is better than house and land;" for; as his son's learning advanced, his houses and lands melted away, or at least would have done had it not been for his mother's fortune, every shilling of which, with half the profits of his estate, he expended on Harry's education, who certainly wants only ten thousand pounds a year to be the most charming young fellow in the universe. Well, he must e'en make the most of his perfections, and endeavour to marry a fortune; on which subject I have a kind of a glimpse of a design, and fancy my friend Harry has not quite so great a contempt of money as I imagined.

You must know then (a pretty phrase that! but to proceed); you must know, that we accompanied Colonel Mandeville fifteen miles; and, after dining together at an inn, he took the road to his regiment, and we were returning pensive and silent to Belmont, when my lord, to remove the tender melancholy we all caught from Harry, proposed a visit to Mr. Westbrook's, a plump, rich, civil cit, whose house we must of necessity pass. As my lord despises wealth, and Mr. Westbrook's genealogy in the third generation loses itself in a livery-stable, he has always avoided an intimacy, which the other has as studiously sought; but as it is not in his nature to treat any body with ill-breeding, he has suffered their visits, though he has been slow in returning them; and has sometimes invited the daughter to a ball.

The lady wife, who is a woman of great erudition, and is at present entirely lost to the world, all her faculties being on the rack, composing a treatise against the immortality of the soul, sent down an

apology : and we were entertained by *Mademoiselle la fille*, who is little, lean, brown, with small pert black eyes, quickened by a large quantity of abominable bad rouge : she talks incessantly ; has a great deal of city vivacity, and a prodigious passion for people of a *certain rank*, a phrase of which she is peculiarly fond. Her mother being above the little vulgar cares of a family, or so unimportant a task as the education of an only child, she was early intrusted to a French chamber-maid, who, having left her own country on account of a *faux pas* which had visible consequences, was appointed to instil the principles of virtue and politeness into the flexible mind of this illustrious heiress of the house of Westbrook, under the title of governess. My information of this morning further says, that, by the cares of this accomplished person, she acquired a competent, though incorrect, knowledge of the French language ; with cunning, dissimulation, assurance, and a taste for gallantry ; to which, if you add a servile passion for quality, and an oppressive insolence to all, however worthy, who want that wealth which she owes to her father's skill in 'Change-alley, you will have an idea of the bride I intended for Harry Mandeville. Methinks I hear you exclaim, "Heavens ! what a conjunction !" 'Tis mighty well ; but people must live, and there is eighty thousand pounds attached to this animal ; and, if the girl likes him, I don't see what he can do better, with birth, and a habit of profuse expense which he has so little to support. She sung, for the creature sings, a tender Italian air, which she addressed to Harry in a manner, and with a look, that convinces me her style is *l'amoroso*, and that Harry is the present object. After the song, I surprised him talking low to her, and pressing her hand, whilst we were all admiring an India cabinet ; and, on seeing he was observed,

he left her with an air of conscious guilt, which convinces me he intends to follow the pursuit, and is at the same time ashamed of his purpose. Poor fellow ! I pity him ; but marriage is his only card, I'll put the matter forward, and make my lord invite her to the next ball. Don't you think I am a generous creature, to sacrifice the man I love to his own good ? When shall I see one of your selfish sex so disinterested ? No ; you men have absolutely no idea of sentiment. *Adio !*

WILMOT.

TO GEORGE MORDAUNT, ESQ.

IT is the custom here for every body to spend their mornings as they please ; which does not, however, hinder our sometimes making parties all together, when our inclinations happen all to take the same turn. My lord this morning proposed an airing to the ladies ; and that we should, instead of returning to dinner, stop at the first neat farm-house where we could hope for decent accommodations. Love of variety made the proposal agreeable to us all ; and a servant being ordered before to make some little provision, we stopped, after the pleasantest airing imaginable, at the entrance of a wood, where, leaving our equipages to be sent to the neighbouring village, we walked up a winding path to a rustic building, embosomed in the grove, the architecture of which was in the most elegant style of simplicity : the trees round this lovely retreat were covered with woodbines and jessamines, from which a gale of perfume met our approach : the gentlest breath of zephyr just moved the leaves ; the birds sung in the branches ; a spring of the clearest water broke

from the rising ground on the left, and murmuring along a transparent pebbly bottom, seemed to lose itself in a thicket of roses : no rude sound disturbed the sweet harmony of nature ; all breathed the soul of innocence and tranquillity, but a tranquillity raised above itself. My heart danced with pleasure ; and, the lovely Lady Julia happening to be next me, I kissed her hand with an involuntary fervour, which called up into her cheeks a blush. " celestial rosy red." When we entered the house we were struck with the propriety, the beauty, the simplicity of all around us : the apartments were few, but airy and commodious ; the furniture plain, but new and in the most beautiful taste ; no ornaments but vases of flowers, no attendants but country girls, blooming as the morn, and drest with a neatness inexpressible.

After an elegant cold dinner, and a desert of cream and the best fruits in season, we walked into the wood with which the house was surrounded, the romantic variety of which it is impossible to describe : all was nature, but nature in her most pleasing form. We wandered over the sweetly-varied scene, resting at intervals in arbours of intermingled roses and jessamines, till we reached a beautiful mossy grotto, wildly lovely, whose entrance was almost hid by the vines which flaunted over its top. Here we found tea and coffee prepared, as if by invisible hands. Lady Anne exclaimed that all was enchantment ; and Lord Belmont's eyes sparkled, with that lively joy which a benevolent mind feels in communicating happiness to others.

Lady Julia alone seemed not to taste the pleasures of the day : her charming eyes had a melancholy languor I never saw in them before. She was reserved, silent, absent ; and would not have escaped Lady Anne's raillery, had not the latter been too

much taken up with the lovely scene to attend to any thing but joy.

As friendship has a thousand groundless fears, I tremble lest I should have been so unhappy as to offend her; I remember she seemed displeased with my kissing her hand, and scarce spoke to me the whole day. I will beg of Lady Anne to ask the cause, for I cannot support the apprehension of having offended her.

It was with difficulty Lord Belmont forced us at night from this enchanting retirement, which he calls his hermitage, and which is the scene of his most pleasing hours. To Lady Anne and me it had a charm it did not want, the powerful charm of novelty: it is about four miles from Belmont house, not far distant from the extremities of the park. To this place, I am told, Lord Belmont often retires, with his amiable family, and those who are particularly happy in his esteem, to avoid the hurry of company and give himself up entirely to the uninterrupted sweets of domestic enjoyment. Sure no man but Lord Belmont knows how to live!

H. MANDEVILLE.

TO COLONEL BELVILLE.

LORD! these prudes—no, don't let me injure her—these people of high sentiment are so “tremblingly alive all o'er!” there is poor Harry in terrible disgrace with Lady Julia, for only kissing her hand, and amidst so bewitching a scene too that I am really surprised at his moderation. All breathed the soul of pleasure; rosy bowers and mossy pillows, cooing doves and whispering zephyrs. I think

my lord has a strange confidence in his daughter's insensibility, to trust her in these seducing groves, and with so divine a fellow in company!—But, as I was saying, she takes the affair quite seriously, and makes it an offence of the blackest dye. Well, I thank my stars, I am not one of these sensitive plants: he might have kissed my hand twenty times, without my being more alarmed than if a fly had settled there; nay a thousand to one whether I had even been conscious of it at all.

I have laughed her out of her resentment, for it is really absurd: the poor fellow was absolutely miserable about it, and begged my intercession, as if it had been a matter of the highest importance. When I saw her begin to be ashamed of the thing, “Really, my dear,” said I, “I am glad you are convinced how ridiculous your anger was, for ill-natured people might have put strange constructions. I know but one way of accounting rationally: if I was Harry, I should be extremely flattered—one would almost suppose—” This answered: I carried my point, and transferred the pretty thing's anger to me: it blushed with indignation, drew up, and, if mamma had not happened to enter the room at that instant, an agreeable scene of altercation would probably have ensued: she took that opportunity of retiring to her apartment, and we saw no more of her till dinner, when she was gracious to Harry and exceedingly stately to me.

O mon Dieu! I had almost forgot: we are to have a little concert this evening; and see, my dear lord appears to summon me. *Adio, caro!*

A. WILMOT.

TO HENRY MANDEVILLE, ESQ.

YES, my dear son, you do me justice : I am never so happy as when I know you are so. I perfectly agree with you as to the charms of Lord Belmont's hermitage, and admire that genuine taste for elegant nature, which gives such a spirited variety to the life of the wisest and most amiable of men.

But does it not, my dear Harry, give you at the same time a very contemptible idea of the power of greatness to make its possessors happy, to see it thus flying as it were from itself, and seeking pleasure not in the fruition, but in the temporary suspension, of those supposed advantages it has above other conditions of life ? Believe me, it is not in the costly dome, but in the rural cot, that the impartial Lord of all has fixed the cheerful seat of happiness. Health, peace, content, and soft domestic tenderness, the only real sweets of life, driven from the gilded palace, smile on the humble roof of virtuous industry.

The poor complain not of the tediousness of life : their daily toil makes short the flying hours, and every moment of rest from labour is to them a moment of enjoyment. Not so the great : surrounded from earliest youth by pleasures which court their acceptance, their taste palled by habit, and the too great facility of satiating every wish, lassitude and disgust creep on their languid hours ; and, wanting the doubtful gale of hope to keep the mind in gentle agitation, it sinks into a dead calm, more destructive to every enjoyment than the rudest storm of adversity. The haughty duchess, oppressed with tasteless pomp, and sinking under the weight of her own importance, is much less to be envied than " the

milk-maid singing blithe," who is in her eyes the object only of pity and contempt.

Your acquaintance with the great world, my dear Harry, has shewn you the splendid misery of superior life : you have seen those most wretched to whom Heaven has granted the amplest external means of happiness. Miserable slaves to pride, the most corroding of human passions ; strangers to social pleasure, incapable of love or friendship, living to others not to themselves, ever in pursuit of the shadow of happiness whilst the substance glides past them unobserved, they drag on an insipid joyless being : unloved and unconnected, scorning the tender ties which give life all its sweetness, they sink unwept and unlamented to the grave. They know not the conversation of a friend, that conversation which " brightens the eyes : " their pride, an invasion on the natural rights of mankind, meets with perpetual mortification : and their rage for dissipation, like the burning thirst of a fever, is at once boundless and unquenchable.

Yet, though happiness loves the vale, it would be unjust to confine her to those humble scenes : nor in her presence, as our times afford a shining and amiable example, unattainable to royalty itself ; the wise and good, whatever their rank, led by the hand of simple unerring nature, are seldom known to miss their way to her delightful abode.

You have seen Lord Belmont (blest with wisdom to choose, and fortune to pursue his choice ; convinced that wealth and titles, the portion of few, are not only foreign to, but often inconsistent with, true happiness) seek the lovely goddess, not in the pride of show, the pomp of courts, or the madness of dissipation : but in the calm of retirement, in the bosom of friendship, in the sweets of dear domestic life, in

the tender pleasing duties of husband and of father, in the practice of beneficence and every gentler virtue. Others may be like him convinced; but few like him have spirit and resolution to burst the magic fetters of example and fashion, and nobly dare to be happy.

What pleasure does it give me to find in you so just a way of thinking in regard to fortune! Yes, my dear Harry, all that in reality deserves the name of good, so far as it centers in ourselves, is within the reach, not only of our moderate income, but of one much below it. Great wealth is only desirable for the power it gives us of making others happy; and, when one sees how very few make this only laudable use of extreme affluence, one acquiesces cheerfully in the will of Heaven, satisfied with not having the temptation of misapplying those gifts of the Supreme Being for which we shall undoubtedly be accountable.

Nothing can, as you observe, be more worthy a reasonable creature than Lord Belmont's plan of life: he has enlarged his own circle of happiness, by taking into it that of all mankind, and particularly of all around him: his bounty glides unobserved, like the deep silent stream: nor is it by relieving so much as by preventing want, that his generous spirit acts: it is his glory and his pleasure, that he must go beyond the limits of his own estate to find objects of real distress.

He encourages industry, and keeps up the soul of cheerfulness amongst his tenants, by maintaining as much as possible the natural equality of mankind on his estate. His farms are not large, but moderately rented: all are at ease, and can provide happily for their families: none rise to exorbitant wealth. The very cottagers are strangers to all that even approaches want: when the busier seasons of the

year are past, he gives them employment in his woods or gardens; and finds double beauties in every improvement there, when he reflects that from thence,

“Health to himself and to his infant bread.
The labourer bears.”

Plenty, the child of industry, smiles on their humble abodes; and, if any unforeseen misfortune nips the blossoms of their prosperity, his bounty, descending silent and refreshing as the dews of heaven, renews their blooming state, and restores joy to their happy dwellings.

To say all in one word, the maxims by which he governs all the actions of his life are manly, benevolent, enlarged, liberal: and his generous passion for the good of others is rewarded by his Creator, whose approbation is his first point of view, with as much happiness to himself as this sublunary state is capable of. Adieu!

Your affectionate

J. MANDEVILLE.

TO COLONEL BELVILLE.

YES, I am indeed fond of your *Italiano*: it is the language of Love and the Muses; has a certain softness, and all that; and by no means difficult to understand—at least it is tolerably easy to understand as much of it as I do, as much as enables one to be conceited, and give one's self airs amongst those who are totally ignorant: when this happens, I look astonished at the Gothic creatures. “Heavens! my dear madam, not know Italian? How I pity your savage ignorance! Not know Italian! *La lingua*

d'amore? Oh! Mirtillo! Mirtillo! Anima mia!"

The dear creatures stare, and hate one so cordially, it is really charming. And if one now and then unluckily blunders upon somebody who is more in the secret than one's self, a downcast look, and "*Ho vergogna, signora,*" saves all, and does credit at once to one's learning and one's modesty. Flattered, too, by so plain a confession of their superiority, they give you credit for whatever degree of knowledge you desire, and go away so satisfied; and exclaim in all companies, "Upon my word, Lady Anne Wilmot is absolutely an exquisite mistress of Italian, only a little too diffident."

I am just come from playing at ball in the garden, Lord Belmont of the party: this sweet old man! I am half in love with him, though I have no kind of hopes; for he told me, yesterday, that, lovely as I was, Lady Belmont was in his eyes a thousand times more so. How amiable is age like his! so condescending to the pleasures of the young! so charmed to see them happy! He gains infinitely in point of love by this easy goodness; and as to respect, his virtues cannot fail to command it.

Oh! *à propos* to age, my lord says, he is sure I shall be a most agreeable old woman; and I am almost of his opinion. Adieu! creature! I can no more.

By the way, do you know that Harry's *cittadina* has taken a prodigious *penchant* for me, and vows no woman on earth has so much wit, or spirit, or *politesse*, as Lady Anne Wilmot? Something like a glimmering of taste this: I protest, I begin to think the girl not quite so intolerable.

Je suis votre

A. WILMOT.

TO THE EARL OF BELMONT.

MY LORD,

AN unforeseen inevitable misfortune having happened to me, for which a too careless economy had left me totally unprovided, I find it necessary to sell my estate and quit the country.

I could find a ready purchaser in Mr. Westbrook, who, with the merciless rapacity of an exchange-broker, watches like a harpy the decline of every gentleman's fortune in this neighbourhood, in order to seize on his possessions: but the tender affection I bear my tenants makes me solicitous to consult their good as much as possible in the sale, since my hard fate will not allow me longer to contribute to it myself: I will not here say more, than that I cannot provide more effectually for their happiness than by selling to your lordship. I am,

My lord,

Your lordship's most

obedient and devoted servant,

JAMES BARKER.

TO JAMES BARKER, ESQ.

SIR,

I AM extremely concerned any accident should have happened, which makes it possible I should lose from my neighbourhood a gentleman of family, of so very worthy a character, and one I so greatly esteem: but I hope means may be found to prevent what would be so extremely regretted by all who have the pleasure of knowing you.

As I have always regarded the independent coun-

try gentlemen as the strength and glory of this kingdom, and the best supports of our excellent constitution, no increase of power or property to myself shall ever tempt me to lessen the number of them, where it can possibly be avoided. If you have resolution to enter on so exact a system of economy as will enable you to repay any sum you may want in seven years, whatever that sum is, I shall be most happy in advancing it, and will take it back in the manner most easy to you. I think I could trace out a plan by which you might retrench considerably in a manner scarce perceptible. I will to-morrow morning call upon you when I am riding out, when we will talk further on this subject. Be assured, none of the greedy leviathans of our days can feel half the pleasure in completing a purchase that I shall do in declining this, if I can be so happy as to keep you amongst us. Your accepting this without hesitation will be a proof of your esteem, which I can never forget, as it will show you think too highly of me to fear my making an ill use hereafter of having had the happiness of doing for you what, if we were to change present situations, I know you would rejoice in doing for me. I have a fund, which I call "the bank of friendship," on which it is my rule to take no interest; and you may command to its utmost extent. I am,

Dear sir,

Your affectionate friend,
and obedient servant,

BELMONT.

TO COLONEL BELVILLE.

Thursday.

WE have been dining *al fresco* in a rustic temple, in a wood near the house : romanesque, simple ; the pillars trunks of ancient oaks, the roof the bark of trees, the pavement pebbles, the seats moss ; the wild melody of nature our music ; the distant sound of the cascade just breaks on the ear, which, joined by the chant of the birds, the cooing of the doves, the lowing of the herds, and the gently-breathing western breeze, forms a concert most divinely harmonious.

Really this place would be charming, if it was a little more replete with human beings ; but to me the finest landscape is a dreary wild, unless adorned by a few groupes of figures. There are squires indeed—well, absolutely, your squires are an agreeable race of people, refined, sentimental, formed for the *belle passion* ; though it must be owned the squires about Belmont are rational animals compared to those my *caro sposo* used to associate with : my lord has exceedingly humanized them, and their wives and daughters are decent creatures, which really amazed me at first ; for you know, Belville, there is in general no standing the country misses.

Your letter is just brought me : all you say of levees and drawing-rooms is thrown away.

“ Talk not to me of courts, for I disdain
All courts when he is by : far be the noise
Of kings and courts from us, whose gentle souls
Our kinder stars have steer'd another way.”

Yes, the rural taste prevails : my plan of life is fixed ; to sit under a hill, and keep sheep with Harry Mandeville.

O mon Dieu! what do I see coming down the avenue? Is it in women to resist that equipage? *Papier maché*—highly gilded—loves and doves—six long-tailed grey Arabians. By all the gentle powers of love and gallantry, Fondville himself!—the dear enchanting creature! Nay, then—poor Harry—all is over with him—I discard him this moment, and take Fondville for my cecisbeo—fresh from Paris—just imported—Oh! all ye gods!

Friday Morning.

I left you somewhat abruptly; and am returned to fill up my epistle with the adventures of yesterday.

The great gates being thrown open, and the chariot drawn up to the steps, my charming Fondville, drest in a suit of light-coloured silk, embroidered with silver, a hat with a black feather under his arm, and a large bouquet of artificial flowers in his button-hole, all Arabia breathing from his well-scented handkerchief, descended, like Adonis from the car of Venus, and, full of the idea of his own irresistibility, advanced towards the saloon—he advanced, not with the doubtful air of a bashful lover intimidated by a thousand tender fears, but in a minuet step, humming an opera tune, and casting a side glance at every looking-glass in his way. The first compliments being over, the amiable creature seated himself by me, and began the following conversation:—

“Well, but my dear Lady Anne, this is so surprising—your ladyship *in campagna*? I thought Wilmot had given you a surfeit of the poet’s Elysium—horrid retirement!—how do you contrive to kill time?—though Harry Mandeville, indeed—a widow of spirit may find some amusement there.”

"Why really, Fondville, a pretty fellow does prodigiously soften the horrors of solitude."

"Oh, nothing so well."

"And Harry has his attractions."

"Attractions! *ah! l'amore!* the fairest eyes of Rome—"

"But pray, my dear lord, how did the court bear my absence?"

"In despair: the very zephyrs about Versailles have learnt to sigh, *La Belle Anglaise!*"

"And Miremont?"

"Inconsolable: staid away from two operas."

"Is it possible? the dear constant creature! how his sufferings touch me!—but here is company."

"Any body one knows?"

"I rather think not."

"What! the good company of the environs, the *arriere ban*, the *posse comitatus*?"

"Even so: my lord *brings down the natives upon us*; but, to do the creatures justice, one shall seldom see tamer savages."

Here the door opening, Fondville rose with us all, and, leaning against the wainscot, in an attitude of easy indifference, half bowing, without deigning to turn his eyes on those who entered the room, continued playing with my fan, and talking to me in a half whisper, till all were seated; when my dear Lady Belmont, leading the conversation, contrived to make it general, till, tea being over, my lord proposed a walk in the gardens; where having trifled away an hour very pleasantly, we found music ready in the saloon at our return, and danced till midnight.

Lord Viscount Fondville (he would not have you omit viscount for the world) left us this morning. My lord is extremely polite and attentive to him,

on the supposition of his being my lover; otherwise he must expect no supernumerary civilities at Belmont; for, as it is natural to value most those advantages one possesses one's self, my lord, whose nobility is but of the third generation, but whose ancestry loses itself in the clouds, pays much greater respect to a long line of illustrious ancestors than to the most lofty titles: and I am sorry to say my dear Fondville's pedigree will not stand the test. He owes his fortune and rank to the iniquity of his father, who was deep in the infamous secret of the South Sea bubble.

'Tis however a good-natured, inoffensive, lively, showy animal, and does not flatter disagreeably. He owns Belmont not absolutely shocking, and thinks Lady Julia rather tolerable, if she was so happy as to have a little of my spirit and *enjoûment*.

Adio!

A. WILMOT.

O Ciel! what a memory! This is not past day. You may possibly gain a line or two by this strange forgetfulness of mine.

Saturday.

Nothing new, but that *la Signora* Westbrook, who visited here yesterday, either was, or pretended to be, taken ill before her coach came: and Harry, by her own desire, attended her home in Lady Julia's post-chaise. He came back with so grave an air, that I fancy she had been making absolute, plain, downright love to him: her ridiculous fondness begins to be rather perceptible to every body. Really these city girls are so rapid in their amours, they won't give a man time to breathe.

Once more, adieu!

VOL. XXVII.

E

TO GEORGE MORDAUNT, ESQ.

June 15.

I HAVE just received a letter which makes me the most unhappy of mankind : 'tis from a lady whose fortune is greatly above my most sanguine hopes, and whose merit and tenderness deserve that heart which I feel it is not in my power to give her. The general complacency of my behaviour to the lovely sex, and my having been accidentally her partner at two or three balls, has deceived her into an opinion that she is beloved by me ; and she imagines she is only returning a passion, which her superiority of fortune has prevented my declaring. How much is she to be pitied ! my heart knows too well the pangs of disappointed love, not to feel most tenderly for the sufferings of another, without the additional motive to compassion of being the undesigned cause of those sufferings, the severest of which human nature is capable. I am embarrassed to the greatest degree, not what resolution to take ; that required not a moment's deliberation ; but how to soften the stroke, and in what manner, without wounding her delicacy, to decline an offer, which she has not the least doubt of my accepting, with all the eager transport of timid love, surprised by unexpected success.

I have written to her, and think I shall send this answer ; I inclose you a copy of it : her letter is already destroyed : her name I conceal. The honour of a lady is too sacred to be trusted, even to the faithful breast of a friend.

" TO MISS ———.

" No words, madam, can express the warmth of

my gratitude for your generous intentions in my favour, though my ideas of probity will not allow me to take advantage of them.

“ To rob a gentleman, by whom I have been treated with the utmost hospitality, not only of his whole fortune, but of what is infinitely more valuable, a beloved and amiable daughter, is an action so utterly inconsistent with those sentiments of honour which I have always cultivated, as even your perfections cannot tempt me to be guilty of. I must therefore, however unwillingly, absolutely decline the happiness you have had the goodness to permit me to hope for; and beg leave to subscribe myself, madam, with the utmost gratitude and most lively esteem,

“ Your most obliged and devoted servant,

“ H. MANDEVILLE.”

I ought perhaps to be more explicit in my refusal of her; but I cannot bring myself to shock her sensibility, by an appearance of total indifference. Surely this is sufficiently clear, and as much as can be said by a man sensible of, and grateful for, so infinite an obligation.

You will smile when I own, that, in the midst of my concern for this lady, I feel a secret, and I fear an ungenerous, pleasure, in sacrificing her to Lady Julia's friendship, though the latter will never be sensible of the sacrifice.

Yes, my friend, every idea of an establishment in the world, however remote or however advantageous, dies away before the joy of being esteemed by her, and at liberty to cultivate that esteem. Determined against marriage, I have no wish, no hope, but that of being for ever unconnected, for ever blest in her conversation, for ever allowed, uninterrupted, unrestrained by nearer ties, to hear

that enchanting voice, to swear on that snowy hand eternal amity, to listen to the unreserved sentiments of the most beautiful mind in the creation, uttered with the melody of angels. Had I worlds, I would give them to inspire her with the same wishes !

H. MANDEVILLE.

TO COLONEL BELVILLE.

Wednesday night.

I CAN'T conceive, Belville, what it is that makes me so much the men's taste : I really think I am not handsome—not so very handsome—not so handsome as Lady Julia ;—yet I don't know how it is—I am persecuted to death amongst you—the misfortune to please every body—'tis amazing—no regularity of features—fine eyes indeed—a vivid bloom—a seducing smile—an elegant form—an air of the world—and something extremely well in the *toute ensemble*—a kind of an agreeable manner—easy, spirited, *degagée*—and for the understanding—I flatter myself malice itself cannot deny me the beauties of the mind. You might justly say to me, what the Queen of Sweden said to Mademoiselle le Fevre ; “ With such an understanding, are you not ashamed to be handsome ? ”

Thursday morning.

Absolutely deserted. Lord and Lady Belmont are gone to town this morning on sudden and unexpected business. Poor Harry's situation would have been pitiable; had not my lord, considering how impossible it was for him to be well with us both *à trio*, sent to Fondville to spend a week here in their absence, which they hope will not be much longer.

Harry, who is viceroy, with absolute power, has only one commission; to amuse Lady Julia and me, and not let us pass a languid hour till their return.

O Dio! Fondville's Arabians! the dear creature looks up—he bows—"That bow might from the bidding of the gods command me."

Don't you love quotations? I am immensely fond of them; a certain proof of erudition: and, in my sentiments, to be a woman of literature is to be—In short, my dear Belville, I early in life discovered, by the mere force of genius, that there were two characters only in which one might take a thousand little innocent freedoms, without being censured by a parcel of impertinent old women—those of a *Bel Esprit* and a *Methodist*; and the latter not being in my style, I chose to set up for the former, in which I have had the happiness to succeed so much beyond my hopes, that the first question now asked amongst polite people, when a new piece comes out, is, "What does Lady Anne Wilmot say of it?" A scornful smile from me would damn the best play that ever was written; as a look of approbation, for I am naturally merciful, has saved many a dull one. In short, if you should happen to write an insipid poem, which is extremely probable, send it to me, and my *fiat* shall crown you with immortality.

Oh! Heavens! *à propos*, do you know that Bell Martin, in the wane of her charms, and past the meridian of her reputation, is absolutely married to Sir Charles Canterall? Astonishing! till I condescend to give the clue. She praised his bad verses. A thousand things appear strange in human life, which, if one had the real key, are only natural effects of a hidden cause. "My dear Sir Charles," says Bell, "that divine Sapphic of yours—those melting sounds—I have endeavoured to set it—but Orpheus or

Amphion alone—I would sing it—yet fear to trust my own heart—such ecstatic numbers!—who that has a soul”—She sung half a stanza, and, overcome by the magic force of verse, leaning on his breast, as if absorbed in speechless transport, “she fainted, sunk, and died away.” Find me the poet upon earth who could have withstood this. He married her the next morning.

O Ciel! I forgot the *caro* Fondville. I am really inhuman. Adieu! *Je suis votre amie tres fidelle*. I can absolutely afford no more at present.

TO HENRY MANDEVILLE, ESQ.

London, June 20.

YOU can have no idea, my dear Mr. Mandeville, how weary I am of being these few days only in town. That any one who is happy enough to have a house, a cottage in the country, should continue here at this season, is to me inconceivable; but that gentlemen of large property, that noblemen should imprison themselves in this smoaking furnace, when the whole land is a blooming garden, a wilderness of sweets; when pleasure courts them in her fairest form; nay, when the sordid god of modern days, when Interest joins his potent voice; when power, the best power, that of doing good, solicits their presence; can only be accounted for by supposing them under the dominion of fascination, spell-caught by some malicious demon, an enemy to human happiness.

I cannot resist addressing them in a stanza or two of a poem, which deserves to be written in letters of gold:

" Mean time, by pleasure's sophistry aller'd,
 From the bright sun and living breeze ye stray:
 And deep in London's gloomy haunts immur'd,
 Brood o'er your fortune's, freedom's, health's decay.
 O blind of choice, and to yourselves untrue!
 The young grove shoots, their bloom the fields renew,
 The mansion asks its lord, the swains their friend;
 While he doth riot's orgies haply share,
 Or tempt the gamester's dark destroying snare,
 Or at some courtly shrine with slavish incense bend.
 And yet full oft your anxious tongues complain
 That careless tumult prompts the rustic throng;
 That the rude village inmates now disdain
 Those homely ties which rul'd their fathers long.
 Alas! your fathers did by other arts
 Draw those kind ties around their simple hearts,
 And led in other paths their ductile will:
 By succours, faithful counsel, courteous cheer,
 Won them the ancient manners to revere,
 To prize their country's peace, and Heaven's due rights
 fulfil."

Can a nobleman of spirit prefer the rude insults of
 a licentious London rabble, the refuse of every land,
 to the warm and faithful attachment of a brave, a
 generous, a free, and loyal yeomanry in the country?
 Does not interest as well as virtue and humanity
 prompt them, by living on their estates, to imitate
 the heavens, which return the moisture they draw
 from the earth, in grateful dews and showers?

When I first came to Belmont, having been some
 years abroad, I found my tenants poor and dejected,
 scarce able to gain a hard penurious living; the
 neighbouring gentlemen spending two-thirds of the
 year in London, and the town which was the market
 for my estate filled only with people in trade, who
 could scarce live by each other. I struck at the
 root of this evil, and by living almost altogether in
 the country myself, brought the whole neighbour-
 hood to do the same. I promoted every kind of

diversion, which soon filled my town with gentlemen's families, which raised the markets, and of consequence the value of my estate: my tenants grew rich at the same rents which before they were unable to pay; population increased, my villages were full of inhabitants, and all around me was gay and flourishing. So simple, my dear Mr. Mandeville, are the maxims of true policy: but it must be so; that machine which has the fewest wheels is certainly the most easy to keep in order.

Have you had my old men to dine? At sixty I admit them to my table, where they are always once a fortnight my guests. I love to converse with those "whom age and long experience render wise;" and, in my idea of things, it is time to slacken the reins of pride, and to wave all sublunary distinctions, when they are so near being at an end between us. Besides, I know, by my own feelings, that age wants the comforts of life: a plentiful table, generous wines, cheerful converse, and the notice of those they have been accustomed to revere, renews in some degree the fire of youth, gives a spring to declining nature, and perhaps prolongs as well as enlivens the evening of their days. Nor is it a small addition to my satisfaction, to see the respect paid them by the young of their own rank, from the observation of their being thus distinguished by me. As an old man, I have a kind of interest in making age an object of reverence; but, were I ever so young, I would continue a custom which appears to me not less just than humane.

Adieu! my esteemed, my amiable friend. How I envy you your larks and nightingales!

Your faithful

BELMONT.

TO COLONEL BELVILLE.

Thursday.

POSITIVELY, Belville, I can answer for nothing : these sylvan scenes are so very bewitching : the vernal grove and balmy zephyr are so favourable to a lover's prayer, that if Fondville was any thing but a " pretty man about town," my situation would be extremely critical.

This wicked Harry, too, has certainly some evil design : he forms nothing but enchanting rural parties, either a *quarrée*, or with others of the young and gay : not a maiden aunt has appeared at Belmont since his reign commenced. He suffers no ideas to enter our imaginations but those of youth, beauty, love, and the seducing pleasures of the golden age. We dance on the green, dine at the hermitage, and wander in the woods by moon-light, listening to the song of the nightingale, or the sweeter notes of that little syren Lady Julia, whose impassioned sounds would soften the marble heart of a virgin of eighty-five.

I really tremble for my fair friend ; young, artless, full of sensibility, exposed hourly to the charms of the prettiest fellow upon earth, with a manner so soft, so tender, so much in her own romantic way—

A rap at my door—Fondville is sent for away—company at his house—sets out immediately—I must bid the dear creature adieu—

I am returned : pity me, Belville !

" The streams, the groves, the rocks remain ;
But Damon still I seek in vain."

Yes, the dear man is gone : Harry is retired to write letters, and Lady Julia and I are going to take

a walk, *tête-à-tête*, in the wood. *Jesu Maria!* a female *tête-à-tête!*—I shall never go through the operation—if we were *en confidence* indeed, it might be bearable: but the little innocent fool has not even a secret. *Adio!*

Yours,

A. WILMOT.

TO GEORGE MORDAUNT, ESQ.

OH! Mordaunt! I am, indeed, undone: I was too confident of my own strength: I depended on the power of gratitude and honour over my heart, but find them too weak to defend me against such inexpressible loveliness. I could have resisted her beauty only, but the mind which irradiates those speaking eyes—the melting music of those gentle accents, “soft as the fleeces of descending snows”—the delicacy, yet lively tenderness of her sentiments—that angel innocence—that winning sweetness—the absence of her parents, and Lady Anne’s coquetry with Lord Fondville, have given me opportunities of conversing with her, which have for ever destroyed my peace. I must tear myself from her: I will leave Belmont the moment my lord returns. I am for ever lost—doomed to wretchedness; but I will be wretched alone. I tremble lest my eyes should have discovered—lest pity should involve her in my misery.

Great Heavens! was I not sufficiently unhappy? To stab me to the heart, I have just received the following letter from Lord Belmont:

“ TO HENRY MANDEVILLE, ESQ.

June 22.

“ The present member of parliament for —— being in a state of health which renders his life extremely uncertain, it would be very agreeable to me if my dear Mr. Mandeville would think of offering himself a candidate to succeed him. I will, however, be so plain as to tell him, he will have no assistance from me except my wishes, and has nothing to trust to but his merits and the name of Mandeville; it being a point both of conscience and honour with me, never to intermeddle in elections. The preservation of our happy constitution depends on the perfect independence of each part of which it is composed on the other two: and the moment—Heaven grant that moment to be far distant!—when the House of Lords can make a House of Commons, liberty and prerogative will cease to be more than names, and both prince and people become slaves.

“ I therefore always, though the whole town is mine, leave the people to their free and uninfluenced choice: never interfering farther than to insist on their keeping themselves as unbiassed as I leave them. I would not only withdraw my favour from, but prosecute, the man who was base enough to take a bribe, though he who offered it was my nearest friend.

“ By this means I have the pleasure also of keeping myself free, and at liberty to confer favours where I please; so that I secure my own independence by not invading that of others.

“ This conduct, I cannot help thinking, if general, would preserve the balance of our glorious constitution; a balance of much greater consequence to Britons than the balance of power in Europe, though

so much less the object of their attention. In this we resemble those persons, who, whilst they are busied in regulating the domestic concerns of their neighbours, suffer their own to be ruined.

“But to return from this unintended digression—You will perhaps object to what I have proposed, that, during your father’s life, you are not qualified for a seat in parliament. I have obviated this objection. Lady Mary, the only sister of my father, has an ample fortune in her own power to dispose of: some part of it was originally her own; but much the larger part was left her by her lover, Sir Charles Barton, who was killed in Queen Anne’s wars the very morning before he was to have set out for England to complete his marriage. Being the last of his family, he had made a will, in which he left his estate to Lady Mary, with a request, that, if she did not marry, she would leave it to one of the name of Mandeville. As she loves merit, and has the happiness and honour of our house warmly at heart, I have easily prevailed on her to settle five hundred pounds a-year on you at the present, and to leave you a good part of the rest at her death. Her design hitherto, I will not conceal from you, has been to leave her fortune to my daughter, of whom she is infinitely fond; but Julia has enough, and by leaving it to you, she more exactly fulfils the will of Sir Charles, who, though he has not expressly made the distinction, certainly meant it to a male of the Mandeville name. The estate is about two thousand pounds a-year; her own fortune of fourteen thousand pounds, I shall not oppose her leaving to my daughter.

“I know too well the generous sentiments of your heart, to doubt that, in procuring this settlement, I give to my country a firm and unshaken patriot, at once above dependence on the most virtuous court,

and the mean vanity of opposing the just measures of his prince from a too eager desire of popularity : not that I would have you insensible to praise, or the esteem of your country : but seek it only by deserving it ; and though it be in part the reward, let it not be the motive of your actions : let your own approbation be your first view, and that of others only your second.

“ You may observe, my dear Mr. Mandeville, I only caution you against being led away, by youthful vanity, to oppose the just measures of your prince : I should wrong the integrity of your heart, if I supposed you capable of distressing the hands of government for mercenary or ambitious purposes. A virtuous senator will regard not men, but measures, and will concur with his bitterest enemies in every salutary and honest purpose ; or rather, in a public light, he will have no enemies but the enemies of his country.

“ It is with caution I give even these general hints. Far be it from me to attempt to influence your judgment : let your opinion be ever free and your own ; or, where your inexperience may want information, seek it from the best and most enlightened of mankind, your excellent father, who has long sat with honour in the same house.

“ Let me now, my amiable friend, thank you for your obliging attention, not only to the ladies, of whom I could not doubt your care, but to my tenants : one of whom writes me word, that coming to inquire when I should return, with a look of anxiety which shewed my return was of consequence to him, you took him aside, and, inquiring his business, found he wanted, from an accident which had involved him in a temporary distress, to borrow an hundred pounds, for which you gave him a draft on your banker, with a goodness and sweetness of

manner which doubled the obligation ; making only one condition, which the overflowing of his gratitude has made him unable to keep, that it should be a secret to all the world.

“ Can Lady Mary do too much for a man who thus shews himself worthy the name of Mandeville, the characteristic of which has ever been the warmest benevolence ?

“ Another would, perhaps, insist on returning the money to you ; but I will not rob you of the pleasure of making an honest man happy : you will however observe, that it is this once only I indulge you ; and that you are the only person from whom I have ever suffered my family, for such I esteem all placed by Providence under my protection, to receive an obligation : 'tis a favour I have refused even to your father.

“ Do not answer this : I shall possibly be with you before a letter could reach me.

“ Adieu. Your affectionate

“ BELMONT.”

Can I, after this letter, my dear Mordaunt, entertain a wish for Lady Julia, without the blackest ingratitude ? No, though I will not accept his generous offer, I can never forget he has made it. I will leave Belmont : I will forget her. What have I said ? Forget her ! I must first lose all sense of my own being.

Am I born to know every species of misery ? I have this moment received a second letter from the lady I once mentioned to you, filled with the softest and most affecting expressions of disinterested tenderness. Indiscreet from excess of affection, she adjures me to meet her one moment in the rustic temple, where she is waiting for me. Her messenger is gone : and, as I will not hazard exposing her

by sending my servant, I have no choice left but to go ; Heaven knows how unwillingly ! Should we be seen, what an appearance would such a meeting have ! I left Lady Julia to write letters, and on that account excused myself from attending her : yet can I leave her, whom love alone has made imprudent, to the consequence of her indiscretion, and the wild sallies of a mind torn by disappointment and despair ! I will go : but how shall I behold her ! how tell her pity is all I can return to so generous a passion ? These trials are too great for a heart like mine, tender, sympathetic, compassionate, and softened by the sense of its own sufferings. I shall expire with regret and confusion at her sight. Farewell.

H. MANDEVILLE.

TO COLONEL BELVILLE.

OUR party last night did not turn out so much in the still-life way as I expected. Unfortunate that I am ! Two rivals at once ! *La bellissima* Julia has most certainly a *penchant* for Harry : 'tis absurd, for the thing is impossible. In the first place, I am rather afraid he has a kind of attachment to this creature ; and in the second, I know Lord Belmont's sentiments on this head, and that, with all his generosity, no man breathing has a greater aversion to unequal marriages : the difference is so immense in every thing but birth and merit, that there remains not a shadow of hope for her. But these people of high heroics are above attending to such trifling things as possibilities. I hope I am mistaken : but the symptoms are strong upon her, as you shall judge.

I left you last night, to accompany Lady Julia to the wood we are both so fond of. The evening was

lovely beyond description, and we were engaged in a very lively conversation ; when, as we approached the temple, we saw Harry, who had just left us on pretence of writing letters, come out of it with the detestable Westbrook leaning familiarly on his arm, her pert eyes softened into languishment, and fixed eagerly on his. The forward creature started at seeing us, and attempted to fly, which Harry prevented, and, withdrawing his arm from hers, as if mechanically, advanced slowly towards us, with a look so confused, a mien so disordered, so different from that easy air which gives ten thousand graces to the finest form in the world, as convinced me that this meeting was not accidental. Lady Julia stopt the moment she saw them : a deep blush overspread her face, she fixed her eyes on the ground, and waited their approach silent and unmoved as a statue. Not so the cit : the creature's assurance, and the ease with which she recovered herself and addressed Lady Julia, excited equally my astonishment and indignation. She told her, she came to wait on her ladyship, and the fineness of the evening had tempted her to leave her coach at the entrance of the wood : that, as she walked through, she happened to meet Mr. Mandeville, quite by chance, she assured her ladyship, as he would testify. Harry disdained to confirm her falsehood even by an assenting look : his silence, the coldness of his manner, with the air of dignity and spirit Lady Julia assumed, almost disconcerted her. We walked silently to the house, where the girl only stayed till her coach was ordered round, and then left us : her eyes asked Harry's attendance, but he chose not to understand their language.

This evening was the only unpleasant one I ever passed at Belmont : a reserve, unknown before in that seat of sincere friendship, took place of the

sweet confidence which used to reign there, and to which it owes its most striking charms. We retired earlier than common; and Lady Julia, instead of spending half an hour in my apartment as usual, took leave of me at the door, and passed on to her own.

I am extremely alarmed for her: it would have been natural to have talked over so extraordinary an adventure with me, if not too nearly interested. There was a constraint in her behaviour to Harry all the evening—an assumed coldness: his assiduity seemed to displease her; she sighed often; nay once, when my eyes met hers, I observed a tear ready to start: she may call this friendship if she pleases; but these very tender, these apprehensive, these jealous friendships, between amiable young people of different sexes, are exceedingly suspicious.

It is an hour later than her usual time of appearing, and I hear nothing of her: I am determined not to indulge this tender melancholy, and have sent up to let her know I attend her in the saloon; for I often breakfast in my own apartment, it being the way here for every body to do whatever they like.

Indeed! a letter from Lady Julia! A vindication? Nay, then—"Guilty, upon my honour!" Why imagine I suspect her? Oh! conscience! conscience!

Her extreme fear of my supposing her in love with Harry is a convincing proof that she is; though such is her amiable sincerity, that I am sure she has deceived herself before she would attempt to deceive me: but the latter is not so easy; sitters-by see all the game.

She tells me, "she cannot see me till she has vindicated herself from a suspicion which the weakness of her behaviour yesterday may have caused: that she is not sure she has resolution to mention

the subject when present : therefore takes this way to assure me, that, tender and lively as her friendship for Mr. Mandeville is, it is only friendship — a friendship which his merit has hitherto justified, and which has been the innocent pleasure of her life : that, born with too keen sensibilities (poor thing ! I pity her sensibilities), the ill treatment of her friend wounds her to the soul : that zeal for his honour and the integrity of his character, which she thinks injured by the mysterious air of last night's adventure ; her shock at a clandestine and dissembled appointment, so inconsistent with that openness which she had always admired in him, as well as with the respect due to her, now so particularly in her father's absence under his protection, had occasioned that concern which she fears may make her appear to me more weak than she is."

In short, she takes a great deal of pains to lead herself into an error ; and struggles in those toils which she will find great difficulty in breaking.

Harry's valet has just told my woman, his master was in bed but two hours last night ; that he walked about his room till three, and rose again at five, and went out on horseback without a servant. The poor fellow is frightened to death about him ; for he is idolized by his servants, and this man has been with him from his childhood. But adieu ! I hear Lady Julia upon the stairs : I must meet her in the saloon.

Eleven o'clock.

Poor soul ! I never saw any thing like her confusion when we met : she blushed, she trembled, and sunk half motionless into her chair. I made the tea, without taking the least notice of her inability to do it ; and by my easy chit-chat manner soon brought her to be a little composed : though her eye was often turned towards the door, though she started at

every sound, yet she never asked the cause of Harry's absence, which must however surprise her, as he always breakfasts below.

Foreseeing we should be a very awkward party to-day *à trio*, I sent early in the morning to ask three or four very agreeable girls about two miles off to come and ramble all day with us in the woods: happily for poor Lady Julia, they came in before we had done breakfast; and I left them to go and look at some shellwork, whilst I came up to finish my letter.

Harry is come back, and has sent to speak with me. I am really a person of great consequence at present. I am in a very ill humour with him; he may well be ashamed to appear: however, the worst of criminals deserves to be heard. I will admit him. He is at the door. *Adio!*

A. WILMOT.

TO GEORGE MORDAUNT, ESQ.

Wednesday, five in the morning.

GREAT Heaven! what a night have I passed! all other fears give way before that of displeasing her. Yes, let me be wretched, but let her not suppose me unworthy: let her not see me in the light of a man who barter the sentiments of his soul for sordid views of avarice or ambition, and, using means proportioned to the baseness of his end, forges a falsehood to excuse his attendance on her, seduces an heiress to give him clandestine assignations, and in a place guarded, doubly guarded at this time, by the sacred and inviolable laws of hospitality, from such unworthy purposes.

I will clear my conduct, though at the hazard of exposing her whose love for me deserves a different

treatment : let her be the victim of that indiscretion by which she has ruined me. And can I be thus base ? Can I betray the believing unsuspecting heart ? My mind is distracted—but why do I say betray ? I know Lady Anne's greatness of mind : and for Lady Julia—yes, the secret will be as safe with them as in my own bosom.

Shall I own all my folly ? I cannot, though she shall never know my passion for herself, support one moment the idea of Lady Julia's imagining I love another.

I will go to Lady Anne as soon as she is up, and beg her to convince her lovely friend my meeting this lady was accidental. I will not, if I can avoid it, say more.

I cannot see her before this explanation. I will ride out, and breakfast with some friend : I would not return till they are gone back to their apartments, that I may see Lady Anne alone.

Twelve o'clock.

Lady Anne has probed me to the quick : I have trusted her without reserve as to this affair. I have begged her to vindicate me to Lady Julia, who is walking in the garden with some ladies of the neighbourhood : we are going to follow them. I am to take the ladies aside, whilst Lady Anne pleads my cause. She calls me. Farewell.

Twelve at night.

She forgives me, and I am most happy. Lady Anne has told her all, and has had the goodness to introduce me to her as we walked, unobserved by the ladies who were with us. I have kissed her hand as a seal of my pardon. That moment ! Oh ! Merdaunt ! with what difficulty did I restrain the transport of my soul !

Yes, my friend, she forgives me. A sweet benign serenity reigns in her lovely eyes : she approves my conduct ; she is pleased with the concern I shew at giving pain to the heart which loves me : her cheerfulness is returned, and has restored mine ; she rules every movement of my heart as she pleases : never did I pass so happy a day. I am all joy ; no sad idea can enter ; I have scarce room even for the tender compassion I owe to her I have made wretched. I am going to bed, but without the least expectation of sleep : joy will now have the same effect as I last night found from a contrary cause. Adieu !

H. MANDEVILLE.

TO COLONEL BELVILLE.

Thursday morning.

I HAVE reconciled the friends ; the scene was amazingly pathetic and pretty : I am only sorry I am too lazy to describe it. He kissed her hand, without her shewing the least symptom of anger : she blushed indeed ; but, if I understand blushes—in short, times are prodigiously changed.

The strange misses were of infinite use, as they broke the *continuity* of the tender scene (if I may be allowed the expression) which, however entertaining to *les amies*, would have been something sickly to my ladyship, if it had lasted.

And now, having united, it must be my next work to divide them ; for, seriously, I am apt to believe the dear creatures are in immense danger of a kind of partiality for each other, which would not be quite so convenient.

I have some thoughts, being naturally sentimental and generous, of taking Harry myself, merely from compassion to Lady Julia. Widows, you know, are in some degree the property of handsome young fellows who have more merit than fortune; and there would be something very heroic in devoting myself to save my friend. I always told you, Belville, I was more an antique Roman than a Briton. But I must leave you: I hear Lady Julia coming to fetch me: we breakfast *à trio* in a bower of roses.

Oh! Heavens! the plot begins to thicken—Lucretia's dagger—Rosamonda's bowl—Harry has had a letter from his charmer—vows she can't live without him—determined to die unless the barbarous man relents.—This cruel Harry will be the death of us all.

Did I tell you we were going to a ball to-night, six or seven miles off? She has heard it, and intends to be there: tells him, she shall there expect the sentence of life or death from his lovely eyes. The signal is appointed: if his savage heart is melted, and he pities her sufferings, he is to dance with her, and be master of her divine person and eighty thousand pounds to-morrow: if not—but she expires at the idea—she entreats him to soften the cruel stroke, and not give a mortal wound to the tenderest of hearts by dancing with another.

You would die to see Harry's distress—so anxious for the tender creature's life, so incensed at his own wicked attractions, so perplexed how to pronounce the fatal sentence. For my part, I have had the utmost difficulty to keep my countenance;—Lady Julia, who was to have been his partner, sighing with him over the letter, entreating him not to dance, pitying the unhappy love-sick maid, her fine eyes glistening with a tear of tender sympathy.

The whole scene is too ridiculous to be conceived, and too foolish even to laugh at. I could stand it no longer ; so retired, and left them to their soft sorrows.

You may talk of women, but you men are as much the dupes of your own vanity as the weakest among us can be. Heaven and earth ! that, with Harry's understanding and knowledge of the world, he can be seriously alarmed at such a letter ! I thought him more learned in the arts of " wilful woman labouring for her purpose." Nor is she the kind of woman : I think I know more of the nature of love, than to imagine her capable of it. If there was no other lover to be had indeed—but he is led astray by the dear self-complacency of contemplating the surprising effects of his own charms.

I see he is shocked at my insensibility, and fancies I have a most unfeeling heart ; but I may live to have my revenge. *Adio !* I am going to my toilet. " Now awful beauty puts on all its arms."

Five o'clock.

The coach is at the door. Harry is dressed for execution : always elegant, he is to-day studiously so ; a certain proof, to be sure, that his vanity is weaker than his compassion. He is, however, right : if she must die, he is to be commended for looking as well as he can, to justify a passion which is to have such fatal effects : he sees I observe his dress, and has the grace to blush a little. *Adio, caro !*

Votre

A. WILMOT.

TO COLONEL BELVILLE.

Friday morning.

WE are again at Belmont. But, oh! how changed; all our heroics destroyed—poor Harry! I can't look at him without laughing.

Our journey thither was pensive, our conversation sentimental. We entered the ball-room trembling with apprehension; where the first object which struck our eyes was the tender, love-sick, dying maid, listening with the most eager attention to Fondville, who was at the very moment kissing her hand; her whole soul in her eyes, her heart fluttering with a pleasure which she could not conceal, and every feature on the full stretch of coquetry.

An involuntary frown clouded the lovely countenance of my Harry, which was not lessened by his observing a malicious smile on mine. He advanced, however, towards her, when she, not doubting his design was to ask her to dance, told him, in a faltering voice, with a mixed air of triumph and irresolution, her eyes fixed on her fan, that she was engaged to Lord Fondville.

Harry was thunderstruck: a glow of indignation flushed his cheek, and he left her without deigning to make her any reply; which I observing, and fearing she might misinterpret his silence, and that the idea of his supposed disappointment might flatter the creature's vanity, took care to explain to her that he was engaged to Lady Julia before we came; a piece of information which made her feel to the quick, even through the pleasure of dancing with a lord; a pleasure which has inconceivable charms for a citizen's daughter, and which love itself, or what she pleases to call love, could not enable her to resist.

The attention of all the company was now turned on Harry and Lady Julia, who were dancing a minuet: the beauty of their persons, the easy dignity of their air, the vivid bloom of their cheeks, the spirit which shone in their eyes, the inimitable graces of their movement, which received a thousand additional charms from (what, I hope, no one observed but myself) their desire of pleasing each other, gave me an idea of perfection in dancing, which never before entered my imagination: all was still as night; not a voice, not a motion, through the whole assembly. The spectators seemed afraid even to breathe, lest attention should be one moment suspended. Envy herself seemed dead, or to confine her influence to the bosom of Miss Westbrook. The minuet ended, a murmur of applause ran through the room, which, by calling up her blushes, gave a thousand new charms to Lady Julia, which I observed to the cit; adding also aloud, "that it was impossible any body should think of dancing minuets after them;" in which sentiment every body concurring, we began country-dances. Harry never looked so lovely; his beauty and the praises lavished on him having awakened a spark of that flame which her ambition had stifled for a moment; the girl endeavoured, at the beginning of the evening, to attract his notice, but in vain: I had the pleasure to see him neglect all her little arts, and treat her with an air of unaffected indifference, which I knew must cut her to the soul. She then endeavoured to pique him by the most flaming advances to Fondville, which knowing your capricious sex as I do, rather alarmed me: I therefore determined to destroy the effect of her arts, by playing off, in opposition, a more refined species of coquetry, which turned all Fondville's attention on myself, and saved Harry from the snare

she was laying for him, a snare of all others the hardest to escape.

When I saw I had by the most delicate flattery chained Fondville to my car for the night, and by playing off a few quality airs inspired him with the strongest contempt for his city partner, I threw myself into a chair; where, affecting an excess of languor and fatigue, and wondering at the amazing constitutions of the country ladies, I declared my intention of dancing no more.

Sir Charles Mellifont, who danced with me, sat down on one side, and Fondville on the other, pouring forth a rhapsody of tender nonsense, vowing all other women were only foils to me, envying Sir Charles's happiness, and kissing my hand with an affectation of transport, which pleased me, as I saw it mortified the cit, who sat swelling with spite in a window near us, in a situation of mind which I could almost have pitied.

I sat a full hour, receiving the homage of both my adorers, my head reclined, and my whole person in an attitude of the most graceful negligence and inattention; when, observing the cittadina ready to faint with envy and indignation, turning my eye carelessly on her, "Oh, Heavens! Fondville," said I, "you are an inhuman creature; you have absolutely forgot your partner." Then, starting up with Sir Charles, rejoined the dance with an air of easy impertinence, which she could not stand, but burst into tears and withdrew.

You must know, this affair was all of my contriving: I was determined to try the reality of the girl's passion, to quiet Harry's conscience as to the cruelty of rejecting her suit, and remove those apprehensions for her life which seemed so infinitely to distress him.

Full of these ideas, I wrote by one of my servants to Fondville, immediately after Harry communicated to us the cittadina's tragedy-letter, commanding him to be at this ball dressed for conquest ; to inquire out Miss Westbrook, whom he had never seen ; to pretend a sudden and violent passion for her ; and to entreat the honour of being her partner : that it was a whim I had taken into my head ; that I would explain my reasons another time, but insisted on his implicit obedience.

“ He came, he saw, he conquered,” as I imagined he would : I knew her rage for title, tinsel, and “ people of a certain rank ;” and that Fondville was exactly calculated for the meridian of her taste, understanding, and education. The overcharged splendour of his dress and equipage must have infinite advantages, with one who had so long breathed city air, over the genuine elegance of Harry Mandeville's ; nor was it possible in the nature of things for the daughter of an exchange-broker to prefer even personal perfection to the dazzling blaze of a coronet. Harry's charms gave way before the flattering idea of a title ; and the gentle god resigned his place to the greater power—ambition.

Things, to be sure, have taken rather a disagreeable turn : but she must thank her own inconstancy, and be content for the future with making love to one man at a time.

I have only one more scene of mortification in view for her, and my malice will be satisfied : I would invite her to a ball at Belmont, let Harry dance with Lady Julia, take Fondville myself, and pair her with the most disagreeable fellow in the room.

You have no notion how Harry's vanity is hurt, though he strives all he can to hide it ; piqued to death ; just like one of us, who are pleased with the

love, though we dislike the lover ; he begins to think it possible she may survive his cruelty.

Lady Julia is all astonishment—had no idea of such levity—The amiable ignorant !—how little she knows us—the character of half the sex. *Adio !* I am going with Lady Julia, to pay some morning visits in the environs.

Three o'clock.

Till this morning I had no notion how much Lord and Lady Belmont were beloved, or to speak with more propriety adored, in their neighbourhood : the eager inquiries of the good ladies after their return, their warm expressions of esteem and veneration, are what you can scarce conceive : the swell of affection, which their presence restrained, now breaks forth with redoubled impetuosity.

There are really a great many agreeable people hereabouts. Belmont is the court of this part of the world, and employs its influence, as every court ought to do, in bringing virtue, politeness, and elegant knowledge into fashion. How forcible, how irresistible, are such examples in superior life ! Who can know Lord and Lady Belmont without endeavouring to imitate them ? And who can imitate them without becoming all that is amiable and praiseworthy ?

Do you know, Belville, I begin extremely to dislike myself ? I have good qualities, and a benevolent heart ; but have exerted the former so irregularly, and taken so little pains to rule and direct the virtuous impulses of the latter, that they have hitherto answered very little purpose either to myself or others. I feel I am a comet, shining, but useless, or perhaps destructive ; whilst Lady Belmont is a benignant star.

But, for Heaven's sake, how came the spirit of

reflection to seize me? There is something in this air.—*O Cielo! una carrozza!*—my dear Lord Belmont. I fly—*Adio!*

TO GEORGE MORDAUNT, ESQ.

June 23.

THEY are come; the impatient villagers crowd the hall, eager to behold them, transport in every eye, whilst the noble pair scarce retain the tender tear of glowing benevolence. How lovely a picture was the audience they come from giving! how sweet the intercourse of warm beneficence and ardent gratitude! My heart melted at the sight. This evening is devoted to joy—I alone—O Mordaunt! have I known this paradise only to be driven for ever from it?

I cannot to-night mention leaving Belmont: to-morrow I will propose it. I am in doubt where to go: my father is absent from camp on a visit of a fortnight to the Duke of —, his colonel. I have some thoughts of going to Lord T——'s till his return: perhaps I may come to town. All places but this are equal to me: yet I must leave it; I am every moment more sensible of my danger: yes, Mordaunt, I love her; I can no longer deceive myself; I love her with the fondest passion: friendship is too cold a name for what I feel, too cold for charms like hers to inspire: yet, Heaven is my witness, I am incapable of a wish to her disadvantage: her happiness is my first, my only object—I know not what I would say—why does fortune for ever oppose the tender union of hearts? Farewell!

H. MANDEVILLE.

TO COLONEL BELVILLE.

Saturday.

My lord has brought us a thousand presents, a thousand books, a thousand trinkets, all in so exquisite a taste. He is the sweetest man in the world certainly—such delight in obliging—'tis happy for you he is not thirty years younger, and disengaged ; I should infallibly have a passion. He has brought Harry the divinest horse : we have been seeing him ride, “ spring from the ground like feathered Mercury ”—you can have no conception how handsome he looks on horseback. Poor Lady Julia's little innocent heart—I can't say I was absolutely insensible myself. You know I am infinitely fond of beauty, and vastly above dissembling it : indeed it seems immensely absurd that one is allowed to be charmed with living perfection in every species but our own, and that there one must admire only dead colours : one may talk in raptures of a lifeless Adonis, and not of a breathing Harry Mandeville. Is not this a despicable kind of prudery ? For my part, I think nature's colouring vastly preferable to the noblest attempts of art, and am not the less sensible to the graces of a fine form because it is animated. Adieu ! we are going to dine at the hermitage : Lord Belmont is to be my cecisbeo.

TO GEORGE MORDAUNT, ESQ.

How inconsistent is the human mind ! I cannot leave Belmont ; I cannot give up the delight of beholding her : I fancy a softness in her manner

which raises the most flattering ideas: she blushes when her eyes meet mine. Though I see the madness of hope, I indulge it in spite of myself. No one can deserve her; yet, as Lord Belmont honours me with his esteem, I would persuade myself fortune alone forbids. I will struggle with impossibilities: I have many and powerful friends. We have a prince in the early prime of life, the season of generous virtue; a prince, to whom the patriot glow, and that disinterested loyalty which is almost my whole inheritance, cannot but be the strongest recommendations: to him it may be merit to have suffered when the basest of the people rose on the ruins of their country. Those ample possessions, which would have descended to me, and might have raised my hopes to the most angelic of womankind, were gloriously spent in endeavouring to support the throne, when shaken by the rage of faction and narrow-minded bigoted enthusiasm: the younger branch of our family escaped the storm, by having a minor at its head: to this accident, the partiality of an ancestor, and the military talents of his father, Lord Belmont owes the affluence he so nobly enjoys and which I only of all mankind have cause to regret.

These circumstances raise a flattering hope. My views are confused, but I will pursue the track. If I succeed, I may openly avow my passion: if not, the secret of my love shall die with me: never, my friend, will I attempt her heart by unworthy means. Let me endeavour to deserve, and leave to Heaven to determine whether I shall possess the noblest gift it has to bestow. Farewell.

H. MANDEVILLE.

TO GEORGE MORDAUNT, ESQ.

August 1.

I HAVE heard from my father on the subject of Lady Mary's intended settlement, who extremely disapproves my intention of entirely declining it, which he thinks cannot be founded on any motives worthy of me, but on a false pride of disdaining to be obliged, which is in this case unjust, and greatly below my character: that I might as well object to receiving a part of his estate, which he intends to settle on me at the same time. He says, Lord Belmont acts properly, and consistently with himself, and does not at all mean to break in on that independence which can never be too highly valued; that Lady Julia would scarce perceive such an addition to her already splendid fortune, whilst this settlement fixes in some degree of affluence the elder branch of the family, which lost its superiority by the injustice of an ancestor, and that heroic loyalty which has ever characterised our house; that he will talk further with me on this subject when we meet; but in the mean time advises me as a friend zealous for my interest, yet not the less attentive to my honour and the propriety of my conduct, to accept the immediate settlement of five hundred pounds a year, which will enable me to be serviceable to my country: but to postpone to some distant time settling the whole, and to insist that Lady Mary be convinced I deserve her friendship before she lavishes it so profusely on me.

This advice gives me pleasure, as it coincides with my own present sentiments: eager to pursue my scheme of rising to such consequence as may justify my hopes of the only event desirable to me in this world, I am happy in the thought of appear-

ing in every light in which I can attract the notice of my prince: and, by steadily serving him and my country, whose true interest must ever be the same, deserve that favour on which all my designs are founded.

The time not being yet arrived when I can serve the noblest cause in the senate, I will go to Germany, and endeavour first to signalize myself in the manner most suited to my period of life, the season of action, not of counsel: it is shameful, at my age, to recline in the flowery bower of indolence, when the whole world is in arms. I have not yet begun to live: my time has hitherto been less passed in acting, than in preparing to act my part on the great theatre of human life.

Oh, Mordaunt! should I succeed in my views! should the hour come when I may openly avow my passion for the most lovely of womankind! This is the sweet hope which fires my soul, and animates me to the glorious pursuit. Why do closeted moralists, strangers to the human heart, rail indiscriminately at love? When inspired by a worthy object, it leads to every thing that is great and noble: warmed by the desire of being approved by her, there is nothing I would not attempt. I will to-day write to my father for his consent, and embark immediately for the army.

I have just received your letter: you call my design madness, the light in which every animated purpose will appear to minds inactive, unimpassioned, and sunk in the lethargic calm of lifeless tranquillity. —Mordaunt, you speak the cold language of a heart at rest. Talk not of impossibilities: nothing is impossible to a soul impelled by the most lively of all passions, and ardent in a pursuit on which its whole happiness depends: nothing is impossible to him

who aspires to please the most lovely, the most amiable, the most exalted of her sex.

I feel, I know, I shall be successful. I ask not advice, but declare my settled purpose : I am already determined ; and, if your friendship be warm as mine, you will not torture me by further opposition. My father alone has power to change my resolution, but it is a power he will not exert : I shall ask his permission, but inform him at the same time, that by refusing he cuts off all the hope of my future days, and chains me down to a life of tasteless insensibility.

I know him well : he will advise, he will remonstrate, if he disapproves ; but he will leave me that freedom of choice which is the inherent right of every rational being, and which he never in one instance invaded when I was much less capable of judging for myself.

Fearful, however, lest he should disapprove my passion for Lady Julia, I shall not declare it to him at present ; but, as I never will even tacitly deceive him, I shall tell him I have a motive to this design, which I beg his leave to conceal from him till I have a prospect of success.

I this morning mentioned leaving Belmont ; but my lord insists on my staying a few days longer, which are devoted to domestic happiness. I cannot refuse without making him suspect some latent cause ; nor will it make any difference in my plan since I must wait somewhere an answer from my father, which will reach Belmont about the time I shall now leave it. To-morrow sevensnight expect me in town : I shall stay but two nights : I need little preparation : my equipage and attendants are already greatly beyond my fortune, and rather suited to what you call the madness of my expectations.

My father, the most generous of mankind, has always proportioned my expences more to my birth than his moderate income. As my companions have ever been of the first rank, he has supported me greatly above myself, and on a full equality with them, lest I should be dazzled to mean compliances with their faults, by the false splendour they might receive from a superiority in these outward distinctions.

Did I tell you Lord Belmont had presented me with a beautiful Arabian horse, which he bought when in town? What delight has he in giving pleasure to others! What addition, if that can admit addition, to the happiness of the man who is blessed with Lady Julia, will it be to be so nearly allied to worth like Lord Belmont's?

O Mordaunt! were it possible—it is, it must—I will not give room to the faintest idea of disappointment.

Adieu! I have this moment a letter from my father, which I must answer to-night.

H. MANDEVILLE.

TO HENRY MANDEVILLE, ESQ.

Roseberry-House, Tuesday.

IT gives me the warmest pleasure, my dear son, to find you are pleased with the expensive education I have give you, though it reduces your fortune considerably below what it might otherwise have been. I considered that wealth, if necessary to happiness, which I do not believe, might be acquired; but that the flying hours of youth, the season of instruction, are never to be recalled.

I have the happiness to see you reward and justify

my cares by a generous freedom of thinking, and nobleness of sentiment, which the common methods of education might have cramped, or perhaps totally destroyed. It has always appeared to me, that our understandings are fettered by systems, and our hearts corrupted by example; and that there needs no more to minds well disposed than to recover their native freedom, and think and act for themselves. Full of this idea, I have instructed you how but never what to think; I have pointed out the road which leads to truth, but have left you to discover her abode by your own strength of mind: even on the most important of all subjects I have said no more, than that conviction must be on the side of that religion which teaches the purest and most benevolent morality, is most conducive to the general happiness of mankind, and gives the most sublime idea of the Deity.

Convinced that the seeds of virtue are innate, I have only watched to cherish the rising shoot, and prune, but with a trembling hand, the too luxuriant branches.

By virtue I would here be understood to mean, not a partial attention to any one duty of life, but that rectitude of heart which leads us to fulfil all as far as the frailty of human nature will permit, and which is a constant monitor of our faults. Confucius has well observed, "that virtue does not consist in never erring, which is impossible, but in recovering as fast as we can from our errors."

With what joy, my dearest Harry, did I early see in you that warmth of temper, which is alone productive of every extraordinary exertion of the human mind, the proper soil of genius and the virtues; that heat from which light is inseparable!

I have only one fear for you: inured to a habit of profuse expence, I dread your being unable to prac-

tise that frugality which will now be indispensable. To Lady Mary's intended settlement, I will add a third of my estate: but even that is below your birth, and the manner of life to which you are habituated. But why do I doubt you? I know your generosity of spirit, and scorn of every species of slavery; that you will not descend to be indebted, to withhold a moment the price of laborious industry, or lessen the honest profit of the trader by a delay yet more destructive to yourself than to him.

Intended to become a part of the legislative power, you are doubly bound to keep yourself from all temptation of corruption or dependence, by living within your income. The amplest estate is wretched penury, if exceeded by the expences of its possessor.

Need I say more to recommend œconomy to a spirit like yours, than that it is the fountain of liberality, and the parent of independence?

You inquire after the place where I am: it is, except Belmont, the sweetest spot I ever beheld, but in a different style: the situation is rather beautiful than magnificent. There is a mild elegance, a refined simplicity in the air of all around, strongly expressive of the mind of its amiable possessor; a poetic wildness, a luxuriant glow; like that of primeval nature, adorned by the hand of the Graces.

The same spirit of liberty breathes here as with you: we are all perfectly at home: our time is subject to no restraint but that which our desire of obliging each other makes a voluntary imposition.

I am now alone, sitting in an arbour, attentive to the lively chant of the birds, who swell their little throats with a morning hymn of gratitude to their Creator. Whilst I listen, I think of those sweet lines of Cowley:

" All round the little winged choir,
Pathetic tender thoughts inspire:
With ease the inspiration I obey,
And sing as unconcerned, and as well pleas'd as they."

'Tis yet early day: the flocks and herds are spreading over the distant meadows, and joining the universal song of praise to the beneficent Lord of nature.

Rejoicing in the general joy, I adore the God who has expanded so wide the circle of happiness; and endeavour to regulate my own desires by attending to the simplicity of theirs.

When I see the dumb creation, my dear Harry, pursuing steadily the purposes of their being, their own private happiness, and the good of their peculiar species, I am astonished at the folly and degeneracy of man, who acts in general so directly contrary to both; for both are invariably united.

The wise and benevolent Creator has placed the supreme felicity of every individual in those kind, domestic, social affections, which tend to the well-being of the whole. Whoever presumes to deviate from this plan, the plan of God and nature, shall find satiety, regret, or disappointment, his reward.

I this moment receive your letter. You judge perfectly well in saying, there is an activity and restlessness in the mind of man, which makes it impossible for him to be happy in a state of absolute inaction: some point of view, some favourite pursuit, is necessary to keep the mind awake. 'Tis on this principle alone one can account for what seems so extraordinary to the eyes of impartial reason, that avarice and ambition should be the vices of age, that men should most ardently pursue riches and honours at the time when they have the least

prospect of enjoying them. The lively passions of youth subsiding, some active principle must be found to replace them ; and where that warm benevolence of heart is wanting, which is a perpetual source of ever-new delight, I do not wonder they engage in the chase of wealth and power, though sure so soon to melt from their grasp.

The first purpose of my heart, next to that superior and general one of making myself acceptable to my Creator, was to render the most angelic of women, your lovely mother, happy ; in that, Heaven was pleased to disappoint my hopes, by taking her to itself. My second has been to make you the most amiable of men ; in which I am not afraid to say to yourself, I have been successful beyond my most sanguine wishes.

Adieu, my dear son ! may you succeed in every purpose of your soul as fully as I have done in this ; and be as happy as your virtues have made your father !

I am &c.

J. MANDEVILLE.

TO COLONEL BELVILLE.

O HEAVENS ! Belville ! Nay there is absolutely no resisting a man that carries one off. Since you have mentioned the thing, I shall not abate you a scruple. There is no saying how charming it will be : let common beauties inspire whining, submissive, respectful passions ; but let me—heaven and earth ! to be run away with at four-and-twenty !—a paragraph in the papers —“ Yesterday the celebrated Lady Anne Wilmot was forcibly carried off

by a gentleman who had long in vain deprecated her pity. If any thing can excuse so atrocious an action, the unrivalled beauty of the lady"—Dear Belville ! when do you begin your adventure ?

But, in sober sadness, how came you so flippant on the sudden ? Thus it is with you all : use you ill, and not a spaniel can be more under command ; but the least encouragement quite ruins you. There is no saying a civil thing, but you presume upon one's favour so intolerably.—

Why, yes, as you say, the hours passed pleasantly enough at Sudley farm—Pretty rural scenes, tender Platonic chat, perfect confidence, the harmony of souls in unison ; infinite flattery on your side, and implicit belief on mine : the sprightly god of love gave wings to the rapid hours. The gentle Muses too—I think, Belville, you are a pretty enough poet for a man of fashion ; flowery, mild, not overburdened with ideas.

“ O, can you forget the fond hours,
When all by you fountain we stray'd ! ”

I wish I could remember the rest : but you are a cruel creature, never will leave me a copy of any thing, dreading the severity of my criticism. Nay, you are right ; yours are excellent verses, as Moliere says, to lock up in your bureau.

Nine at night,

Peace to the gentle spirit of him who invented cards ! the very bond of peace, and cement of society.

After a philosophical inquiry into the *summum bonum*, I find it to consist in play ; the more sublime pleasures require relaxation, are only for holiday wear, come but now and then, and keep the mind too much expanded : all other delights, all other

amusements, pall: but play, dear, divine, seraphic play, is always new; the same to-day, to-morrow, and for ever.

It reconciles parties, removes distinctions, and restores what my lord calls the natural equality of mankind.

I have only one fault to find with it: that for the time it extremely weakens, or rather totally suspends, the impressions of beauty. The finest woman in the world, whilst at the card-table, is regarded by the most susceptible man only as a being which is to lose its money.

You will imagine success produced these wise reflections: yes, we have been playing a most engaging pool at quadrille in the wood, where I have with the utmost composure won an immensity. If I go on thus, all objections to our union will be removed: I shall be literally a fortune in myself.

Without vanity, I have some little skill in the game; but at present, there is no great degree of merit in winning of the friend, who happened to be of my party, with an absurd conceited squire, who loves quality, and thinks it the greatest honour in the world that I will condescend to win his money. We had four tables under the shade of a spreading oak.

I can no more.—Adieu!

A. WILMOT.

We have had a penitential letter from the citta-dina, with another from papa, offering thirty thousand pounds at present, and fifty thousand at his death, on condition Lord Belmont will get Harry an Irish title: knows it is a bad match, but won't baulk his girl's fancy; and besides, considers Harry has good blood in his veins. We rejected it politely, but with a little of the Mandeville stateliness.

O Heavens ! Fondville's valet !—a billet-doux— I shall be cruel—this murderous form—I must absolutely hide myself, or wear a mask, in pity to mankind. My lord has taken the letter—he brings it me—he is on the stairs.—How ! gone on to Lady Belmont's apartment !—a billet, and not to me !— What can it mean ?—can the dear man be false ?

The infidel ! Yes, he has left me—forgot his vows. —This bewitching Lady Julia ! it is really an heroic exertion of virtue not to hate her. Could you have thought it possible ?——but read his cruel letter.

“ TO THE EARL OF BELMONT.

“ MY LORD,

“ Your lordship will be perhaps surprised—yet why surprised ? Lady Julia is an immense fine creature : and though marriage, to those who know life, cannot but seem an impertinent affair, and what will subject me to infinite ridicule ; yet custom, and what one owes to one's rank, and keeping up a family—

“ In short, my lord, people of a certain consequence being above those romantic views which pair the vulgar, I chose rather to apply to your lordship than the lady, and flatter myself my estate will bear the strictest inspection : not but that, I assure your lordship, I set a due value on Lady Julia's charms ; and though I have visited every court in Europe, and seen all that is lovely in the *beau sexe*, never yet beheld the fair whom I would so soon wish to see fill the rank of Lady Viscountess Fondville as her ladyship.

“ If my pretensions are so happy as to be favourably received by your lordship, I will beg leave to

wait on Lady Julia to-morrow, and my lawyer shall attend your lordship's wherever and whenever you please to appoint. Believe me, my lord, with the most perfect devotion,

"Your lordship's

"most obedient and very humble servant,

"FONDVILLE."

"TO LORD VISCOUNT FONDVILLE.

"MY LORD,

"I am the last man in the world to whom it was necessary to apologize for an intention of entering into a state which, I have experienced, is productive of such exquisite felicity.

"My daughter's choice is perfectly free; nor shall I ever do more than advise her, in an affair of such consequence to herself; but, from what I know of her character, think it highly improbable she should approve the pretensions of a man, who professes being above those tender affections which alone can make happy sensibility like hers.

"Allow me to take the liberty of observing, in answer to the latter part of your lordship's letter, that there are few ranks which Lady Julia Mandeville has not a right to fill. I am, my lord,

"Your lordship's most obedient

"and devoted servant,

"BELMONT."

Don't come to Belmont, I charge you: I shall have this invincible Lady Julia seduce you 'too. Besides, I have some reasons why I choose our attachment should not yet come to a crisis; till when, I will take Lady Belmont's advice, and be pru

dent. Obey in silence : let me have no more sighs till the milder influence of the heavens dispose me to be gracious. I am always in good humour in autumn : your fate may possibly be determined in little more than a month. Ask no questions : suspend your passion, or at least the outward expression of it, and write to me *in amico*. Adieu !

TO GEORGE MORDAUNT, ESQ.

I HAVE been riding alone with Lord Belmont this morning ; a pleasure I very often enjoy and on which I set infinite value. In those hours of perfect confidence, I am certain of being instructed and amused, by a train of ideas uncommon, enlarged, noble, benevolent ; and adapted to inspire me with a love of virtue, by shewing her in her native charms. I shall be all my life the wiser and worthier man for the hours I have passed at Belmont.

But oh ! Mordaunt ! shall I be the happier ? That is in the bosom of futurity. A thousand times have I been tempted, in these hours of indulgent friendship, to open all my heart to Lord Belmont.

I know his contempt of wealth, and how little he thinks it conducive to happiness. "Heaven," said he to me this very morning, "has blessed me with affluence : I am thankful, and endeavour to deserve, by applying an ample portion of it to the purposes of beneficence. But for myself, my pleasures are of so unexpensive and simple a kind, that a diminution of fortune would take very little from my private felicity. Health, content, the sweets of social and domestic life, the only enjoyment suited to the nature of man, are and ought to be within the reach of all the species. Yes, my dear Mr. Mandeville, it

gives a double relish to all my pleasures, to reflect that they are such as every man may enjoy if he will."

Can this man, my dear Mordaunt, sacrifice the real happiness of his child, the calm delight of domestic friendship on which he sets such value himself, to the gaudy trappings of tasteless grandeur? Did she approve my passion, I should hope every thing from the most indulgent of fathers.

He has refused Lord Fondville for Lady Julia, whose fortune is as large as avarice itself could desire. Good Heaven! that such a man, without one other recommendation, without a soul to taste even the charms of her person, can aspire to all than can be imagined of perfection! Adieu!

H. MANDEVILLE.

TO COLONEL BELVILLE.

Thursday afternoon.

O Ciel! I faint! What a world do we live in! how many unavoidable enemies to enjoyment! It is sometimes too cold, sometimes too hot to be happy! One is never pleased a week together. I shall absolutely grow a snarling philosopher, and find fault with every thing.

These unconscionable lovers have dragged me cross an open meadow, exposed to the sun's burning rays—no mercy on my complexion—Lady Julia sure, for her own sake—yet she is laughing at my distress. I am too languid to say more.—Oh! for a cooling breeze!

"The whispering zephyr, and the purling rill."

We are going to have an addition to our group of friends : Emily Howard, daughter to the late Dean of —, a distant relation, and rector of the parish, being expected to-morrow at Belmont: she is Lady Julia's friend in the most emphatic sense of the word. Do you know, I feel extremely inclined to be jealous of her; and am angry with myself for such meanness?

A. WILMOT.

TO COLONEL BELVILLE.

Tuesday, 3rd.

SHE is come, this redoubtable Emily Howard; and I find I have only a second place in Lady Julia's friendship. I would hate her if I could, but it is really impossible: she is so gentle, she steals one's affection imperceptibly, and one has the vexation to be forced to love her in spite of one's self.

She has been here three days, and in that short time she has gained amazingly upon my heart: her person is little, finely proportioned, and delicate almost to fragility; her voice and manner soft and timid; her countenance a mixture of innocence and sweetness, which would disarm the rage of a tiger: her heart is tender, kind, compassionate, and tremblingly awake to friendship, of which she is universally the object. Lady Julia doats on her; nor am I surprised at it: she appears so weak, so helpless, so exquisitely feminine, it seems cruelty not to be her friend. No one ever saw her without wishing her happiness. The love one has for her seems of a peculiar species, or most nearly resembles that instinctive fondness one feels for a beautiful child: it is independent of esteem, for one loves her before

one knows her. It is the pleasantest kind of affection that can be conceived.

Yet, though she is extremely handsome, or rather, to suit the expression to her form, extremely pretty, she is very little the taste of men: her excessive modesty renders both her beauty and understanding in some degree useless to her: "not obvious, not obtrusive," she escapes the observation of common eyes; and, though infinitely lovely, I never heard she was beloved.

For this very reason, the women do her ample justice: she is no woman's rival, stands in nobody's way which cannot fail of exciting a general good-will towards her in her own sex: they even allow her more beauty than she really has, and take a delight in setting her charms in opposition to every impermanent thing the men are fond of. "Yes, the girl is very well, but nothing to Emily Howard," is the common cry on the appearance of a new beauty.

There is another strong reason for loving her; though exact in her own conduct, she has an indulgence to that of others, which is a consequence of her excessive gentleness of temper, and her seeing every action on the favourable side: one could own one's greatest weakness to her almost without blushing; and at this very moment I dare say Lady Julia is confessing to her her passion for Harry Mandeville, who is riding out with my lord. I dare say she would find an excuse for my indiscretion in regard to you, and see only the delicacy of our friendship.

She sings and dances angelically; but she blushes to death, if you tell her so.

Such gentle unassuming characters as these make the most agreeable friends in the world: they are the mild green of the soul, on which it rests itself from more glaring objects. One may be absurd one

may be vain, one may be imprudent, secure of being heard with indulgence. I know nothing which would make her more what I mean but her being a fool : however, the indulgent sweetness of her temper answers almost the same purpose.

I am disconsolate that the *caro Enrico* is going to desert us ; but the cruel man is inflexible to all my soft persuasions, and determined to leave us on Wednesday.

Adieu !

The sweet Emily is going on Thursday for ten days to Sir George Martin's, and then returns to finish the summer here.

Oh ! do you know that I am credibly informed, her favourite *suiante* having told it to one, who told it to another, who told it to a good old gossiping lady, who told it to me, that the cittadina, who has in vain written Harry a penitential letter, is playing off the same arts, the same dying airs, to Fondville, which had such extreme ill success with him ! The siege is at present suspended, not by his addressing Lady Julia, which is a profound secret to her and every body without these walls, but by his mother's death, which has called him hastily to town ; and which, by the way, adds two thousand pounds a-year to his income. Do you know, that I think the thing may do, if Lady Julia continues cruel ? They are absolutely formed for each other ; and it would be a thousand pities to part them.

Ever yours,

A. WILMOT.

TO COLONEL BELVILLE.

August 6.

CERTAINLY, next to a new lover, the pleasantest thing upon earth is a new friend : let antediluvians take seven years to fix ; but for us insects of an hour, nothing can be more absurd : by the time one has tried them on these maxims, one's taste for them is worn out. I have made a thousand friendships at first sight, and sometimes broke them at the second : there is a certain exertion of soul, a lively desire of pleasing, which gives a kind of volatile spirit to a beginning acquaintance, which is extremely apt to evaporate. Some people make a great merit of constancy ; and it is, to be sure, a very laudable virtue ; but, for my part, I am above dissembling : my friendships wear out like my clothes, but often much faster.

Not that this is the case in regard to Emily Howard : no, really, I think this *penchant* is very likely to be lasting ; may probably hold out the summer.

To-morrow, when Harry leaves us, my lord, to divert our chagrin, takes us, with three strange belles and five most engaging beaux, a ramble I cannot tell whither.

Saturday morning.

O Heavens ! one of our male animals has disappointed us. Absolutely I shall insist on Harry's attendance ; he shall defer his journey, I am resolved : there is no supporting a scarcity of beaux.

He goes with us : Lady Julia's eyes have prevailed ; she had seduced him before I went down his chaise is ordered back to wait for ours.

Adio, carissimo.

TO GEORGE MORDAUNT, ESQ.

Saturday night.

I AM still here : when shall I have strength of mind to go ? Not having heard from my father in the time I expected, I was determined to go to Lord T——'s, whose zeal for my interest, and great knowledge of mankind, makes him the properest person I can consult. My chaise was this morning at the door, when my lord told me Lady Julia entreated my stay a few days longer : she blushed, and, with the loveliest confusion, confirmed my lord's assertion : all my resolution vanished in a moment. There is enchantment in her look, her voice—enchantment which it is not in man to resist.

Sunday night.

I am every hour more unhappy : Lord Fondville's proposal gives me infinite uneasiness : not that I fear such a rival ; but it has raised the idea of other pretensions, which may be accepted before it is time for me to avow my designs : I have passed this night in forming schemes to prevent so fatal a blow to all my hopes ; and am determined to own my passion to the lovely object of it, and entreat her, if no other man is so happy as to possess her heart, to wait one year the result of those views which that love which has inspired them may perhaps prosper.

Not certain I shall have courage to own my tenderness in her presence, I will write, and seize some favourable opportunity to give her the letter on which all my happiness depends : I will ask no answer but from her eyes. How shall I meet them, after so daring an attempt ?

We are going to the parish church : the coach is

at the door. Adieu ! She comes ! what graces play around that form ! what divinity in those eyes ! Oh ! Mordaunt, what task will be difficult to him who has such a reward in view !

TO COLONEL BELVILLE.

Sunday evening.

OUR ramble yesterday was infinitely agreeable ; there is something very charming in changing the scene : my lord understands the art of making life pleasurable by making it various.

We have been to the parish church, to hear Dr. H—— preach : he has that spirit in his manner without which the most sensible sermon has very little effect on the hearers. The organ, which my lord gave, is excellent. You know I think music an essential part of public worship, used as such by the wisest nations, and commanded by God himself to the Jews : it has indeed so admirable an effect in disposing the mind to devotion, that I think it should never be omitted.

Our Sundays are here extremely pleasant : we have, after evening service, a moving rural picture from the windows of the saloon, in the villages, for whose amusement the gardens are that day thrown open.

Our rustic mall is full from five to eight ; and there is an inexpressible pleasure in contemplating so many groups of neat, healthy, happy-looking people, enjoying the diversion of walking in these lovely shades, by the kindness of their beneficent lord, who not only provides for their wants, but their pleasures.

My lord is of opinion that Sunday was intended

as a day of rejoicing, not of mortification; and meant not only to render our praises to our benevolent Creator, but to give rest and cheerful relaxation to the industrious part of mankind from the labours of the week.

On this principle, though he will never suffer the least breach of the laws in being, he wishes the severity of them softened, by allowing some innocent amusements after the duties of the day are past: he thinks this would prevent those fumes of enthusiasm which have had here such fatal effects, and could not be offensive to that gracious Power who delights in the happiness of his creatures, and who, by the Royal Poet, has commanded them "to praise him in the cymbals and dances."

For my own part, having seen the good effect of this liberty in Catholic countries, I cannot help wishing, though a zealous Protestant, that we were to imitate them in this particular.

It is worth observing, that the Book of Sports was put forth by the pious, the religious, the sober Charles the First; and the law for the more strict observation of Sunday passed in the reign of the libertine Charles the Second.

Love of pleasure is natural to the human heart: and the best preservative against criminal ones is a proper indulgence in such as are innocent.

These are my sentiments, and I am happy in finding Lord Belmont of the same opinion. *Adio!*

A. WILMOT.

TO GEORGE MORDAUNT, ESQ.

Monday.

MORDAUNT, the die is cast, and the whole happiness of my life hangs on the present moment. After having kept the letter confessing my passion two days without having resolution to deliver it, this morning in the garden, being a moment alone with Lady Julia in a summer-house, the company at some distance, I assumed courage to lay it on a table, whilst she was looking out at a window which had a prospect that engaged all her attention. When I laid it down, I trembled : a chillness seized my whole frame ; my heart died within me ; I withdrew instantly, without even staying to see if she took it up : I waited at a little distance hid in a close arbour of woodbines, my heart throbbing with apprehension, and, by the time she staid in the summer-house, had no doubt of her having seen the letter. When she appeared, I was still more convinced : she came out with a timid air, and looked round as if fearful of surprise ; the lively crimson flushed her cheek, and was succeeded by a dying paleness : I attempted to follow, but had not courage to approach her. I suffered her to pass the arbour where I was, and advance slowly towards the house : when she was out of sight, I went back to the summer-house, and found the letter was gone. I have not seen her. I am called to dinner : my limbs will scarce support me : how shall I bear the first sight of Lady Julia ! how be able to meet her eyes !

I have seen her, but my fate is yet undetermined ; she has avoided my eyes, which I have scarce dared to raise from the ground : I once looked at her when she did not observe me, and saw a melancholy on her countenance which stabbed me to the soul. I

have given sorrow to the heart of her whom I would wish to be ever most happy, and to whose good I would sacrifice the dearest hope of my soul. Yes, Mordaunt, let me be wretched ; but let every blessing Heaven can bestow be the portion of the loveliest of her sex.

How little did I know of love, when I gave that name to the shameful passion I felt for the wife of my friend ! The extreme beauty of the countess Melespini, that unreserved manner which seldom fails to give hope, the flattering preference she seemed to give me above all others, lighted up in my soul a more violent degree of youthful inclination which the esteem I had for her virtues refined to an appearance of the noblest of affections, to which it had not the remotest real resemblance.

Without any view in my pursuit of her but my own selfish gratification, I would have sacrificed her honour and happiness to a transient fondness, which dishonoured my character, and, if successful, might have corrupted a heart naturally full of probity : her amiable reproofs, free from that severity which robs virtue of half her charms, with the generous behaviour of the most injured of mankind, recalled my soul to honour, and stopped me early in the career of folly. Time wore out the impression of her charms, and left only a cold esteem remaining ; a certain proof that she was never the object of more than a light desire, since the wounds which real love inflicts are never to be entirely healed.

Such was the infamous passion which I yet remember with horror : but my tenderness for Lady Julia, more warm, more animated, more violent, has a delicacy of which those only who love like me can form any idea. Independent of the charms of her person, it can never cease but with life ; nor even then, if in another state we have any sense of what

has passed in this ; it is eternal, and incorporated with the soul. Above every selfish desire, the first object of my thoughts and wishes is her happiness, which I could die, or live wretched, to secure : every action of my life is directed to the sole purpose of pleasing her ; my noblest ambition is to be worthy her esteem. My dreams are full of her ; and, when I awake, the first idea which rises in my mind is the hope of seeing her, and of seeing her well and happy. My most ardent prayer to the Supreme Giver of all good is for her welfare.

In true love, my dear Mordaunt, there is a pleasure abstracted from all hope of return ; and were I certain she would never be mine, nay, certain I should never behold her more, I would not, for all the kingdoms of the world, give up the dear delight of loving her.

Those who never felt this enlivening power, this divinity of the soul, may find a poor insipid pleasure in tranquillity, or plunge into vicious excesses to animate their tedious hours ; but those who have can never give up so sweet, so divine a transport, but with their existence, or taste any other joy but in subordination.

Oh, Mordaunt ! when I behold her, read the soft language of those speaking eyes, hear those harmonious sounds—who that has a soul can be insensible ? Yet there are men dead to all sense of perfection, who can regard that angel form without rapture, can hear the music of that voice without emotion ! I have myself with astonishment seen them, inanimate as the trees around them, listen coldly to those melting accents.—There is a sweetness in her voice, Mordaunt, a melodious softness, which fancy cannot paint : the enchantment of her conversation is inexpressible.

Four o'clock.

I am the most wretched of mankind, and wretched without the right of complaining : the baseness of my attempt deserves even the pangs I suffer. Could I, who made a parade of refusing to meet the advances of the daughter of almost a stranger, descend to seduce the heiress of him on earth to whom I am most obliged ? Oh, Mordaunt ! have we indeed two souls ? Can I see so strongly what is right, yet want power to act up to my own sentiments ? The torrent of passion bears down all before it. I abhor myself for this weakness. I would give worlds to recall that fatal letter : her coldness, her reserve, are more than I can support. My madness has undone me. My assiduity is importunate. I might have preserved her friendship. I have thrown away the first happiness of my life. Her eyes, averted, shun me as an object of hatred. I shall not long offend her by my presence. I will leave her for ever. I am eager to be gone, that I may carry far from her—Oh, Mordaunt ! who could have thought that cruelty dwelt in such a form ? She hates me, and all my hopes are destroyed for ever.

Belmont, Monday evening.

This day, the first of my life ; what a change has this day produced ! These few flying hours have raised me above mortality. Yes, I am most happy ; she loves me, Mordaunt : her conscious blushes, her downcast eyes, her heaving bosom, her sweet confusion, have told me what her tongue could not utter. She loves me, and all else is below my care : she loves me, and I will pursue her. What are the mean considerations of fortune to the tender union of hearts ? Can wealth or titles deserve her ? No,

Mordaunt, love alone. She is mine by the strongest ties, by the sacred bond of affection. The delicacy of her soul is my certain pledge of happiness. I can leave her without fear: she cannot now be another's.

I told you my despair this morning: my lord proposed an airing; chance placed me in Lady Julia's chaise. I entered it with a beating heart: a tender fear of having offended, inseparable from real love, kept me some time silent: at length, with some hesitation, I begged her to pardon the effect of passion and despair; vowed I would rather die than displease her; that I did not now hope for her love, but could not support her hate.

I then ventured to look up to the loveliest of women. Her cheeks were suffused with the deepest blush; her eyes, in which was the most dying languor, were cast timidly on the ground, her whole frame trembled, and with a voice broken and interrupted, she exclaimed, "Hate you, Mr. Mandeville! O Heaven!"—She could say no more; nor did she need; the dear truth broke like a sudden flash of light on my soul.

Yet think not I will take advantage of this dear prepossession in my favour to seduce her from her duty to the best of parents; from Lord Belmont only will I receive her. I will propose no engagements contrary to the rights of an indulgent father, to whom she is bound by every tie of gratitude and filial tenderness. I will pursue my purpose, and leave the event to Heaven—to that Heaven which knows the integrity, the disinterested purity of my intentions. I will evince the reality of my passion by endeavouring to be worthy of her. The love of such a woman is the love of virtue itself: it raises, it refines, it ennobles every sentiment of the heart. How different from that fever of selfish desire I felt for the amiable countess!

Oh, Mordaunt! had you beheld those blushes of reluctant sensibility, seen those charming eyes softened with a tenderness as refined as that of angels!—She loves me—let me repeat the dear sounds—she loves me, and I am happier than a god!

I have this moment a letter from my father: he approves my design, but begs me for a short time to delay it. My heart ill bears this delay: I will carry the letter to Lady Julia.

She approves my father's reasons, yet begs I will leave Belmont. Her will is the law of my heart; yet a few days I must give to love. I will go on Tuesday to Lord T——'s. His friendship will assist me in the only view which makes life supportable to me: he will point out, he will lead me, to the path of wealth and greatness.

Expect to hear from me when I arrive at Lord T——'s. I shall not write sooner: my moments here are too precious. Adieu!

Your faithful

M. MANDEVILLE.

TO HENRY MANDEVILLE, ESQ.

August 6.

HAPPY in seeing in my son that heroic spirit which has ever distinguished our house, I should with pleasure consent to his design, were this a proper time to execute it, provided he went a volunteer, and determined to accept no command but as a reward of real services, and with a resolution it should never interfere with that independence to which I would have him sacrifice every other consideration; but, when there is so strong a probability of peace, his

going would appear like making a parade of that courage which he did not expect would be tried.

Yes, my son, I am well assured we shall have peace; that the most amiable of princes, the friend of human kind, pitying the miseries of his species, and melting with compassion at the wide-extended scene of desolation, meditates such a peace as equally provides for the interest and honour of Britain, and the future quiet of mankind. The terms talked of are such as give us an immense addition of empire, and strengthen that superiority of naval force on which our very being depends. Whilst they protect our former possessions, and remove the source of future wars, by securing all, and much more than all, for which this was undertaken; yet, by their just moderation, convince the world a British monarch is governed only by the laws of honour and equity, not by that impious thirst of false glory, which actuates the laureled scourges of mankind.

After so long, so extensive and bloody a war; a war which has depopulated our country, and loaded us with a burden of debt from which nothing can extricate us but the noble spirit of public frugality, which, if steadily and uniformly pursued, will rank the name of our prince with those of Elizabeth and Henry the Great, all ardently wish for peace, but those who gain by the continuance of war. The clamours of these are inconceivable; clamours which can be founded only in private interest, because begun before they could even guess at the terms intended, and continued when such are mentioned as reason herself would dictate. But such ever will be the conduct of those in whom love of wealth is the primary passion.

Heaven and earth! can men, wearing the form and professing the sentiments of humanity, deaf to cries of the widow and the orphan, labour to per-

petuate the dreadful carnage, which has deluged the world with the blood of their fellow-creatures, only to add to the mass of their already unwieldy wealth, and prey longer on the distresses of their country!

These clamours are as illegal as they are indecent. Peace and war are the prerogatives of the crown, sacred as the liberties of the people, nor will ever be invaded by those who understand and love our happy constitution. Let us strengthen the hands of our sovereign by our warm approbation during the course of this arduous work; and if his ministers abuse their trust, let them answer it, not to the noise of unthinking faction, or the unfeeling bosom of private interest, but to the impartial laws of their country.

Heaven forbid I should ever see a British king independent of his people collectively: but I would have him raised above private cabals or the influence of any partial body of men, however wealthy or respectable.

If the generous views of our prince do not meet with the success they merit; if France refuses such a peace as secures the safety of our colonies, and that superiority as a naval power so necessary to the liberties of Europe, as well as our own independence; you shall join the army in a manner becoming your birth and the style of life in which you have been educated. Till then, restrain within just bounds that noble ardour so becoming a Briton; and study to serve that country with your counsels in peace, which will not, I hope, have occasion for your sword in war.

TO MISS HOWARD.

Wednesday, August 11.

MY Emily, your friend, your unhappy Julia, is undone. He knows the tenderness which I have so long endeavoured to conceal. The trial was too great for the softness of a heart like mine: I had almost conquered my own passion, when I became a victim to his. I could not see his love, his despair, without emotions which discovered all my soul. I am not formed for deceit: artless as the village maid, every sentiment of my soul is in my eyes: I have not learnt, I will never learn, to disguise their expressive language. With what pain did I affect a coldness to which I was indeed a stranger! But why do I wrong my own heart? I did not affect it. The native modesty of my sex gave a reserve to my behaviour, on the first discovery of his passion, which his fears magnified into hate. Oh! Emily! do I indeed hate him? You, to whose dear bosom your Julia confides her every thought, tell me if I hate this most amiable of mankind? You know by what imperceptible steps my inexperienced heart has been seduced to love: you know how deceived by the sacred name of friendship——But why do I seek to excuse my sensibility? Is he not worthy all my tenderness? Are we not equal in all but wealth, a consideration below my care? Is not his merit above title and riches? How shall I paint his delicacy, his respectful fondness? Too plainly convinced of his power over my heart, he disdains to use that power to my disadvantage. He declares he will never receive me but from my father. He consents to leave me till a happier fortune enables him to avow his love to all the world: he goes without asking the least promise in his favour. Heaven sure will pros-

per his designs ; will reward a heart like his. Oh ! my Emily ! did my father see with my eyes ! What is fortune in the balance with such virtue ! Had I worlds in my own power, I should value them only as they enabled me to show more strongly the disinterestedness of my affection.

Born with a too tender heart, which never before found an object worthy its attachment, the excess of my affection is unspeakable. Delicate in my choice, even of friends, it was not easy to find a lover equal to that idea of perfection my imagination had formed : he alone, of all mankind, rises up to it ; the speaking grace, the easy dignity of his air, are the natural consequences of the superiority of his soul. He looks as if born to command the world.—I am interrupted. Adieu.

TO COLONEL BELVILLE.

August 15.

YOU never were more mistaken : you will not have the honour of seeing me yet in town. My lord thinks it infinitely more respectful to his royal master to celebrate this happy event in the country.

“ My congratulations,” says he, “ would be lost in the crowd of a drawing-room ; but here I can diffuse a spirit of loyalty and joy through half a county, and impress all around me with the same veneration and love for the most amiable of princes which burns in my own bosom.”

Our entertainment yesterday was *magnifique*, and in the *gusto Belmonto*. There is a beautiful lake in the park, on the borders of which, on one side, interspersed amongst the trees which form a woody theatre round it, at a distance of about three hundred

yards, tents were fixed for the company to dine in, which consisted of all the gentlemen's families twenty miles round. Westbrook and his daughter were there, as my lord would not shock them by leaving them only out when the whole neighbourhood were invited; though he observed, smiling, "this was a favour, for these kind of people were only gentlemen by the courtesy of England." Streamers of the gayest colours waved on the tops of the tents, and glittered in the dancing sun-beams. The tables were spread with every delicacy in season, at which we placed ourselves in parties, without ceremony or distinction, just as choice or accident directed. On a little island in the midst of the lake, an excellent band of music was placed, which played some of the finest compositions of Handel during our repast; which ended, we spread ourselves on the borders of the lake, where we danced on the verdant green, till tea and coffee again summoned us to the tents; and, when evening "had in her sober livery all things clad," a superb supper, and grand ball in the saloon, finished our festival.

Nor were the villagers forgot: tables were spread for them on the opposite side of the lake, under the shade of the tallest trees, and so disposed as to form the most agreeable points of view to us, as our encampment must do to them.

I am ill at describing; but the feast had a thousand unspeakable charms.

Poor Harry! how I pity him! His whole soul was absorbed in the contemplation of Lady Julia, with whom he danced. His eyes perpetually followed her; and, if I mistake not, his will not be the only heart which aches at parting on Tuesday; for so long is Harry's going postponed. He may go, but, like the wounded deer, he carries the arrow in his breast. *Adio!*

A. WILMOT.

TO MISS HOWARD.

Tuesday, August 17.

How, my sweet Emily, shall I bear his absence—an absence embittered by the remembrance of those lively impassioned hours which love alone can give? What joy have I found in owning the sentiments of my soul to one so worthy of all my tenderness! Yes, Emily, I love him—words can but ill paint what I feel—he, he alone—yet he leaves Belmont—leaves it by my command—leaves it this very hour—leaves it perhaps for ever. Great Heaven! can I support that thought?

If you love, if you pity your unhappy friend, return immediately to Belmont: let me repose my sorrows in that faithful breast. Lady Anne is tenderly my friend: but the sprightliness of her character intimidates me: I do not hope to find in her that sweet indulgence to all my faults as in the gentle soul of my Emily.

I have entreated him to take no leave of me: I shall only see him with the family. The moment draws near—my fluttering heart—how shall I hide my concern? Lady Anne is coming to my apartment: I must go with her to the saloon, where he only waits to bid us adieu: his chaise is in the court. Oh! Emily! my emotion will betray me.

He is gone: the whole house is in tears. Never was man so adored: never man so infinitely deserved it. He pressed my hand to his lips: his eyes spoke unutterable love. I leaned almost fainting on Lady Anne, and hid my tears in her bosom. She hurried me to my apartment, and left me to give vent to my full heart. She sees my weakness, and kindly strives to hide it from others, whilst her delicacy prevents her mentioning it to myself. She has a tender and

compassionate heart, and my reserve is an injury to her friendship.

Lady Anne has sent to ask me to air: I shall be glad to avoid all eyes but hers. Perhaps I may have courage to tell her—she merits all my confidence; nor is it distrust, but timidity, which prevents—she is here—I am ashamed to see her. Adieu! my dearest, my beloved friend!

TO COLONEL BELVILLE.

Friday night.

WE have lost our lovely Harry: he left us this morning for Lord T——'s. Poor Lady Julia! how I adore her amiable sincerity! she has owned her passion to me as we aired, and mentioned hopes which are founded in madness. I ventured gently to remonstrate; but there is no reasoning with a heart in love. Time and absence may effect a cure. I am the confidante of both. I am perplexed how to proceed: I must either betray the trust reposed in me, or abuse Lord Belmont's friendship and hospitality.

In what a false light do we see every thing through the medium of passion! Lady Julia is heiress to fourteen thousand pounds a-year, yet thinks Harry's merit may raise him to a situation which will justify his pretending to her; and that this stupendous rise may be brought about in a twelvemonth. He, too, thinks it possible: nay, the scheme is his. Heaven and earth!—yet they are not fools, and Harry has some knowledge of mankind.

At present there is no talking reasonably to either of them. I must sooth them, to bring them off this ruinous inclination by degrees.

As idleness is the nurse of love, I will endeavour to keep Lady Julia continually amused. A new lover might do much; but there is nobody near us that is tolerable: indeed, the woman who has loved Harry Mandeville, will be somewhat hard to please.

Chance favours my designs: my lord has proposed a visit of a fortnight to a neighbouring nobleman, Lord Rochdale, whose house is generally full of gay people. His son, too, Lord Melvin, with whom I was acquainted abroad, and who is only inferior to Harry Mandeville, is hourly expected from his travels.

Since I wrote the last paragraph, an idea has struck me: from a very particular expression in a letter I once received from Lady Belmont, in France, I have a strong suspicion Lord Melvin is intended for Lady Julia. I wish he might be agreeable to her, for her present passion is absolute distraction.

We go to-morrow. When we come back, you shall hear from me; or, perhaps, for I am something variable in my determination, as soon as I get thither. Expect nothing, however: if I do you the honour, you must set an immense value on my condescension, for I know we shall not have a moment to spare from amusements. Adieu!

A. WILMOT.

TO GEORGE MORDAUNT, ESQ.

I HAVE at length left Belmont, and left it certain of Lady Julia's tenderness. I am the happiest of mankind: she loves me, she confesses it: I have every thing to hope from time, fortune, perseverance, and the constancy of the most amiable of her sex.

All cold reserve is banished from that charming bosom: above the meanness of suspicion, she believes

my passion noble and disinterested as her own : she hears my vows with a pleasure which she cannot, nay which she does not wish to conceal : she suffers me to swear eternal tenderness. We dined on Wednesday at the hermitage. The company dispersed : the most delicate of women, not from coquetry, but that sweet impulsive modesty, " not obvious, not obtrusive," which gives to beauty its loveliest charm, avoided an opportunity, which eager watchful love at last obtained. Alone with her in those sweet shades ! Oh, Mordaunt ! let not the gross unloving libertine talk of pleasure : how tasteless are the false endearments, the treacherous arts of the venal wanton, to the sweet unaffected downcast eye of virgin innocence, the vivid glow of artless tenderness, the native vermilion of blushing sensibility, the genuine smile of undissembled love !

I write this on the road to Lord T——'s, where I shall be to-night. I shall expect to hear from you immediately. Adieu !

H. MANDEVILLE.

TO HENRY MANDEVILLE, ESQ.

Mount Melvin, Thursday.

I NEVER so strongly relish the happiness of my own manner of living, as when I compare it with that of others. I hear perpetual complaints abroad of the tediousness of life, and see in every face a certain weariness of themselves, from which I am so happy as to be perfectly free. I carry about me an innate disposition to be pleased, which is the source of continual pleasure.

That I have escaped what is in general the fate of people of my rank, is chiefly owing to my fortunate

choice in marriage ; our mutual passion, the only foundation on which sensible souls can build happiness, has been kept alive by a delicacy of behaviour, an angel purity, in Lady Belmont, to which words cannot do justice. The transports of youthful passion yield in sweetness to the delight of that refined, yet animated sensation which my heart feels for her at this moment. I never leave her without regret, nor meet her without rapture, the lively rapture of love, .

“ By long experience mellow’d into friendship.”

We have been married thirty years. There are people who think she was never handsome ; yet to me she is all loveliness. I think no woman beautiful but as she resembles her ; and even Julia’s greatest charm, in my eye, is the likeness she has to her amiable mother.

This tender, this exquisite affection, has diffused a spirit through our whole lives, and given a charm to the most common occurrences—a charm, to which the dulness of apathy, and the fever of guilty passion, are equally strangers.

The family where we are furnish a striking example of the impossibility of being happy without the soft union of hearts. Though both worthy people, having been joined by their parents without that affection which can alone make so near a connexion supportable, their lives pass on in a tedious and insipid round : without taste for each other’s conversation, they engage in a perpetual series of diversions, not to give relish to, but to exclude, those retired domestic hours, which are the most sprightly and animated of my life : they seek, by crowds and amusements, to fly from each other and from themselves.

The great secret of human happiness, my dear Mr. Mandeville, consists in finding such constant employment for the mind, as, without over-fatiguing, may prevent its languishing in a painful inactivity. To this end, I would recommend to every man to have not only some important point in view, but many subordinate ones, to fill up those vacant hours, when our great purpose, whatever it is, must be suspended. Our very pleasures, even the best, will fatigue, if not relieved by variety : the mind cannot always be on the stretch, nor attentive to the same object, however pleasing : relaxation is as necessary as activity, to keep the soul in its due equipoise. No innocent amusement, however trifling it may seem to the rigid or the proud, is below the regard of a rational creature, which keeps the mind in play, and unbends it from more serious pursuits.

I often regard at once with pity and astonishment persons of my own rank and age, dragged about in unwieldy state, forging for themselves the galling fetters of eternal ceremony, or the still heavier chains of ambition ; their bodies bending under the weight of dress, their minds for ever filled with the idea of their own dignity and importance ; to the fear of lessening which, they sacrifice all the genuine pleasures of life.

Heaven grant, my dear friend, I may never be too wise, or too proud, to be happy !

To you, my amiable friend, who are just entering on the stage of life, I would recommend such active pursuits as may make you an useful member of society, and contribute to raise your own fortune and consequence in the world, as well as secure the esteem of your fellow-citizens, and the approbation of your prince.

For my own part, like the Roman veterans, I may now be excused, if I ask my discharge from those

anxious pursuits which are becoming only in the vigour of our days, and from those ceremonial attentions which are scarce bearable even then. My duty as a senator, and my respect to my king, nothing but real inability shall ever suspend; but for the rest, I think it time at sixty to be free, to live to one's self, and in one's own way; and endeavour to *be* rather than to *seem* happy.

The rest of my days, except those I owe to my country and my prince, shall be devoted to the sweets of conjugal and paternal affection, to the lively joys of friendship. I have only one wish as to this world—to see Julia married to a man who deserves her, who has sensibility to make her happy, and whose rank and fortune are such as may justify us to the world, above which the most philosophic mind cannot entirely rise: let me but see this, and have a hope that they will pursue my plan of life—let me see them blest in each other, and blessing all around them—and my measure of earthly felicity will be complete.

You know not, my dear Mr. Mandeville, how much my happiness in this world has been owing also to the lively hope of another: this idea has given me a constant serenity, which may not improperly be called the health of the mind, and which has diffused a brightness over all my hours.

Your account of Lord T—— made me smile: his fear of being dismissed at seventy from the toilsome drudgery of business, is truly ridiculous. Rich, childish, infirm, ought not ease and retirement to be the first objects of his wishes? But such is the wretched slavery of all who are under the absolute dominion of any passion, unguided by the hand of reason.

The passions of every kind, under proper restraints, are the gentle breezes which keep life from stagnation; but, let loose, they are the storms and whirl-

winds which tear up all before them, and scatter ruin and destruction around.

Adieu. I ought to apologize for the length of this : but age is the season of garrulity.

Your affectionate

BELMONT.

TO THE EARL OF BELMONT.

How happy would it be for mankind, if every person of your lordship's rank and fortune governed themselves by the same generous maxims !

It is with infinite pain I see Lord T—— pursuing a plan, which has drawn on him the curse of thousands, and made his estate a scene of desolation. His farms are in the hands of a few men, to whom the sons of the old tenants are either forced to be servants, or to leave the country to get their bread elsewhere. The village, large and once populous, is reduced to about eight families : a dreary silence reigns over their deserted fields : the farm-houses, once the seats of cheerful smiling industry, now useless, are falling in ruins around him : his tenants are merchants and ingrossers, proud, lazy, luxurious, insolent, and spurning the hand which feeds them.

Yesterday one of them went off largely in his debt : I took that occasion of pressing him on his most vulnerable side, and remonstrating the danger of trusting so much of his property in one hand : but I am afraid all I can say will have no effect, as he has, by this narrow selfish plan, a little increased his rents at present, which is all he has in view, without extending his thoughts to that future time, when this wretched policy, by depopulating the country,

will lower the price of all the fruits of the earth, and lessen in consequence the value of his estate.

With all my friendship for Lord T——, I cannot help observing in him another fault greatly below his rank and understanding—I mean a despicable kind of pride, which measures worth by the gifts of fortune, of which the largest portion is too often in the hands of the least deserving.

His treatment of some gentlemen, whose fortunes were unequal to their birth and merit, yesterday, at his table, almost determined me to leave his house : I expostulated warmly, though not impolitely, with him on the subject, and almost got him to confess his error. My friendship for him makes me feel sensibly what must lessen his character in the eyes of all whose esteem is desirable. I wish him to pass a month at Belmont, that he may see dignity without pride, and condescension without meanness ; that he may see virtue in her loveliest form, and acknowledge her genuine beauty. I am,

My lord,

Your lordship's, &c.

H. MANDEVILLE.

TO GEORGE MORDAUNT, ESQ.

Friday.

I HAVE passed a tedious fortnight at Lord T——'s without tasting any pleasure but that of talking of Lady Julia with some ladies in the neighbourhood who know her. I estimate the merit of those I converse with, by the distinction of being known to her : those who are so happy as to be of her acquaintance have, in my eye, every charm that polished wit, or elegant knowledge, can give ; those who want that

advantage, scarce deserve the name of human beings: all conversation, of which she is not the subject, is lifeless and insipid; all of which she is, brilliant and divine.

My lord rallies me on my frequent visits to these ladies, and, as one of them is extremely handsome, supposes it a beginning passion: the lady herself, I am afraid, is deceived; for as she is particularly warm in her praises of Lady Julia, my eyes sparkle with pleasure at her approach. I single her out in every company, and dance with her at all our little parties: I have even an attention to her superior to that of common lovers, and feel for her a tenderness for which I want a name.

Lady Anne has had the goodness to write twice to me from Lord Rochdale's, whither my lord went with his amiable family two days after I left Belmont: Lady Julia is well; she loves me, she hears of me with pleasure. Ought I at present to wish more?

I have hinted to Lord T—— my purpose, though not the dear motive which inspired it: he is warmly my friend, if there is truth in man. I will be more explicit the first time I see him alone. Shall I owe to you one weakness of my heart? I would be served by any interest but Lord Belmont's. How can I pretend to his daughter, if all I have is in a manner his gift? I would be rich independently of his friendship.

Lord T—— is walking in the garden alone; I will go to him, and explain all my designs: his knowledge of mankind will guide me to the best road to wealth and honour; his friendship will assist me to the ample extent of his power. Adieu!

TO HENRY MANDEVILLE, ESQ.

OH! do you know I have a little request to make you? But first, by way of preface, I must inform you, Lady Belmont has been reading me a serious lecture about the *caro* Belville, who has written to her to beg her intercession in his favour.

I find fools have been impertinent in regard to our friendship: there are so few pleasures in this world, I think it extremely hard to give up one so lively, yet innocent, as that of indulging a tender esteem for an amiable man. But to our conversation:

"My dear Lady Anne, I am convinced you love Colonel Belville."

"Love him, madam? No, I rather think not: I am not sure: the man is not shocking, and dies for me: I pity him, poor creature; and pity, your ladyship knows, is a-kin to love."

"Will you be grave one moment?"

"A thousand, if your ladyship desires it: nothing so easy to me; the gravest creature in the world naturally."

"You allow Colonel Belville merit?"

"*Certainement.*"

"That he loves you?"

"To distraction."

"And you return it?"

"Why as to that—he flatters agreeably, and I am fond of his conversation on that account: and let me tell you, my dear Lady Belmont, it is not every man that can flatter; it requires more genius than one would suppose."

"You intend some time or other to marry him?"

"Marry? O Heaven! How did such a thought enter your ladyship's imagination? Have not I been

married already ; and is not once enough in conscience for any reasonable woman ?”

“ Will you pardon me if I then ask, with what view you allow his addresses ?”

“ I allow ! Heavens, Lady Belmont ! I allow the addresses of an odious male animal ? If fellows will fellow one, how is it to be avoided ? It is one’s misfortune to be handsome, and one must bear the consequences.”

“ But, my dear Lady Anne, an unconnected life—”

“ Is the pleasantest life in the world. Have not I three thousand pounds a year ? Am not I a widow ; mistress of my own actions ; with youth, health, a tolerable understanding, an air of the world, and a person not very disagreeable ?”

“ All this I own.”

“ All this ! Yes, and twenty times more, or you do nothing. Have not these unhappy eyes carried destruction from one climate to another ? Have not the sprightly French, the haughty Romans, confessed themselves my slaves ? Have not—But it would take up a life to tell you all my conquests.”

“ But what is all this to the purpose, my dear ?”

“ Now I protest I think it is vastly to the purpose. And all this you advise me to give up, to become a tame, domestic, inanimate—Really, my dear madam, I did not think it was in your nature to be so unreasonable.”

“ It is with infinite pain, my dearest Lady Anne, I bring myself to say any thing which can give you a moment’s uneasiness. But it is the task of true friendship—”

“ To tell disagreeable truths : I know that is what your ladyship would say ; and, to spare you what your delicacy starts at mentioning, you have heard

aspersions on my character which are the consequences of my friendship for Colonel Belville."

"I know and admire the innocent cheerfulness of your heart; but I grieve to say, the opinion of the world—"

"As to the opinion of the world, by which is meant the malice of a few spiteful old cats, I am perfectly unconcerned about it; but your ladyship's esteem is necessary to my happiness: I will therefore to you vindicate my conduct; which, though indiscreet, has been really irreproachable. Though a widow, and accountable to nobody, I have ever lived with Colonel Belville with the reserve of blushing apprehensive fifteen; whilst the warmth of my friendship for him, and the pleasure I found in his conversation, have let loose the baleful tongue of envy, and subjected my reputation to the malice of an ill-judging world; a world I despise for his sake; a world, whose applause is too often bestowed on the cold, the selfish, and the artful, and denied to that generous unsuspecting openness and warmth of heart which are the strongest characteristics of true virtue. My friendship, or if you please my love, for Colonel Belville, is the first pleasure of my life, the happiest hours of which have been passed in his conversation: nor is there any thing I would not sacrifice to my passion for him, but his happiness; which, for reasons unknown to your ladyship, is incompatible with his marrying me."

"But is it not possible to remove those reasons?"

"I am afraid not."

"Would it not then, my dear madam, be most prudent to break off a connexion which can answer no purpose but making both unhappy?"

"I own it would; but prudence was never a part of my character. Will you forgive and pity me,

Lady Belmont, when I say, that, though I see in the strongest light my own indiscretion, I am not enough mistress of my heart to break with the man to whom I have only a very precarious and distant hope of being united? There is an enchantment in his friendship which I have not force of mind to break through: he is my guide, my guardian, protector, friend; the only man I ever loved, the man to whom the last recesses of my heart are open. Must I give up the tender, exquisite, refined delight of his conversation, to the false opinion of a world governed by prejudice, judging by the exterior, which is generally fallacious, and condemning without distinction those soft affections, without which life is scarcely above vegetation?

“Do not imagine, my dear Lady Belmont, I have really the levity I affect: or, had my prejudices against marriage been ever so strong, the time I have passed here would have removed them. I see my lord and you, after an union of thirty years, with as keen a relish for each other's conversation as you could have felt at the moment which first joined you: I see in you all the attention, the tender solicitude of beginning love, with the calm delight, and perfect confidence of habitual friendship. I am, therefore, convinced marriage is capable of happiness to which an unconnected state is lifeless and insipid: and, from observing the lovely delicacy of your ladyship's conduct, I am instructed how that happiness is to be secured; I am instructed how to avoid that tasteless, languid, unimpassioned hour, so fatal to love and friendship.

“With the man to whom I was a victim, my life was one continued scene of misery. To a sensible mind, there is no cold medium in marriage: its sorrows, like its pleasures, are exquisite. Relieved

from those galling chains, I have met with a heart suitable to my own ; born with the same sensibility, the same peculiar turn of thinking ; pleased with the same pleasures, and exactly formed to make me happy. I will believe this similarity was not given to condemn us both to wretchedness. As it is impossible either of us can be happy but with the other, I will hope the bar which at present seems invincible may be removed : till then, indulge me, my dear Lady Belmont, in the innocent pleasure of loving him, and trust to his honour for the safety of mine."

The most candid and amiable of women, after a gentle remonstrance on the importance of reputation to happiness, left me so perfectly satisfied, that she intends to invite Belville down. I send you this conversation as an introduction to a request I have to make you, which I must postpone to my next.—Heavens ! how perverse ! interrupted by one of the veriest cats in nature, who will not leave us till ages after the post is gone. Adieu, for the present ! It is prettily enough contrived, and one of the great advantages of society, that one's time, the most precious of all possessions, is to be sacrificed, from a false politeness, to every idle creature, who knows not what else to do. Every body complains of this, but nobody attempts to remedy it.

Am I not the most inhuman of women, to write two sheets without naming Lady Julia ? She is well, and beautiful as an angel. We have a ball to-night on Lord Melvin's return, against which she is putting on all her charms. We shall be at Belmont tomorrow, which is two or three days sooner than my lord intended.

Lady Julia dances with Lord Melvin, who is, except two, the most amiable man I know : she came up just as I sat down to write, and looked as if she

had something to say. She is gone, however, without a word : her childish bashfulness about you is intolerable.

The ball waits for us. I am interrupted by an extreme pretty fellow, Sir Charles Mellifont, who has to-night the honour of my hand.

A. WILMOT.

TO LADY ANNE WILMOT.

" WE have a ball to-night on Lord Melvin's return, against which she is putting on all her charms."

Oh ! Lady Anne ! can you indeed know what it is to love, yet play with the anxiety of a tender heart ? I can scarce bear the thoughts of her looking lovely in my absence, or in any eyes but mine : how, then, can I support the idea of her endeavouring to please another ; of her putting on all her charms to grace the return of a man, young, amiable, rich, noble, and the son of her father's friend ? A thousand fears, a thousand conjectures torment me. Should she love another—the possibility distracts me.—Go to her, and ask her if the tenderest, most exalted passion, if the man who adores her—I know not what I would say—you have set me on the rack—If you have pity, my dearest Lady Anne, lose not a moment to make me easy.

Yours, &c.

H. MANDEVILLE.

TO MISS HOWARD.

Belmont, Tuesday.

O, EMILY! how inconsistent is a heart in love! I entreated Mr. Mandeville not to write to me, and am chagrined at his too exact obedience. I think, if he loved as I do, he could not so easily obey me. He writes to Lady Anne; and, though by my desire—I am ashamed of my weakness—but I wish he wrote less often: there is an air of gaiety in his letters which offends me. He talks of balls, of parties with ladies—Perhaps I am unjust; but the delicacy of my love is wounded by his knowing a moment's pleasure in my absence. To me all places are equal where he is not: all amusements without him are dull and tasteless. Have not I an equal right to expect, Emily? He knows not how I love him.

Convinced that this mutual passion is the designation of Heaven to restore him to that affluence he lost by the partiality of an ancestor and the generous loyalty of his family, I give way to it without reserve. I regard my love as a virtue: I am proud of having distinguished his merit without those trappings of wealth which alone can attract common eyes. His idea is for ever before me: I think with transport of those enchanting moments—Emily, that week of tender confidence is all my life; the rest is not worth numbering in my existence.

My father to-night gives a ball to Lord Melvin, with whom I am again unwillingly obliged to dance. I wish not to dance at all; to make this sacrifice to the most beloved of men. Why have I not courage to avow my sentiments, to declare he alone—This Lord Melvin, too, I know not why, but I never see him without horror.

O, Emily! how do all men sink on the comparison! He seems of a superior rank of beings. Your Julia will never give her hand to another: she swears this to the dear bosom of friendship.

This detested Lord Melvin is at the door: he will not let me proceed. He tells me it is to a lover I am writing: he says this in a manner, and with a tone of voice—he looks at me with an earnestness—Lady Anne has alarmed me—Should my father intend—yet why should I fear the most cruel of all acts of tyranny from the most tender and indulgent parent?

I feel a dejection of spirits on this subject, which does injury to my father's goodness: perhaps it is no more than the natural effects of absence on a tender and inexperienced heart.

Adieu! I am forced to finish my letter. All good angels guard and preserve my Emily.

Yours,

JULIA MANDEVILLE.

TO THE EARL OF BELMONT.

WITH all my affection for Lord T——, I am hourly shocked by that most unworthy of all faults, his haughtiness to inferior fortune, however distinguished by virtue, talents, or even the more shining advantage of birth. Dress, equipage, and the overbearing assurance which wealth inspires, strikes him so forcibly, that there is no room in his soul for that esteem which is a debt to modest merit.

We had yesterday to dine Mr. Herbert, one of the most amiable men I ever saw. His person was genteel, his countenance at once expressive of genius and worth, which were rendered more touching to me by that pensive look and irresolute air which

are the constant attendants on an adverse fortune. Lord T—— returned his bow almost without looking at him ; and continued talking familiarly to a wretch with whom no gentleman would converse, were he not master of six thousand pounds a-year. The whole company, instructed in his situation by the supercilious air of the master of the house, treated him with the same neglect ; for which I endeavoured to console him, by every little civility in my power, and by confining my attention entirely to him. When we parted, he asked me to his house with a look full of sensibility ; an invitation I shall take the first opportunity of accepting.

When the company were gone, I asked Lord T—— the character of this stranger. “ Why, really,” said he, “ I believe he is in himself the most estimable man in my neighbourhood ; of a good family, too ; but one must measure one’s reception of people by the countenance the world shews them : and he is too poor to be greatly caressed there. Besides, I am not fond of being acquainted with unhappy people : they are very apt to ask favours.”

“ Is it possible,” said I, “ my lord,” interrupting him hastily, “ you can avow sentiments like these ? Why are you raised by Providence above others ? Why intrusted with that wealth and consequence which might make you a guardian angel to the unhappy ?—Where is my chaise ? I will return to Belmont, where affliction ever finds a ready audience ; where adversity is sure of being heard, though pomp and equipage wait.”

Lord T—— smiled at my earnestness, and praised the generosity of my sentiments, which he assured me were his at my age. He owned he had been to blame : “ but in the world,” said he, “ Harry, we are carried away by the torrent, and act wrong every moment mechanically, merely by seeing others do

the same. However, I stand corrected; and you shall have no future reason to complain of me."

He spoke this with an air of good humour which reconciled us; and has promised to accompany me in my visit to Mr. Herbert, which I have insisted shall be the first we pay, and that we shall beg his pardon for the behaviour of yesterday.

Is it not strange, my lord, that men whose hearts are not bad can avoid those whose characters do honour to their species, only because fortune denies them those outward distinctions which wealth can give to the lowest and most despicable of mankind?

Surely, of all human vices, pride is the most detestable!

I am, &c.

H. MANDEVILLE.

TO HENRY MANDEVILLE, ESQ.

CAN I play with the anxiety of a tender heart? Certainly, or I should not be what I am, a coquette of the first order. Setting aside the pleasure of the thing, and I know few pleasanter amusements, policy dictates this conduct; for there is no possibility of keeping any of you without throwing the charms of dear variety into one's treatment of you: nothing cloy's like continual sweets; a little acid is absolutely necessary.

I am just come from giving Lady Julia some excellent advice on the subject of her passion for you. "Really, my dear," said I, "you are extremely absurd to blush and look foolish about loving so pretty a fellow as Harry Mandeville; handsome, well made, lively, elegant; in the true classical

style, and approved by the connoisseurs, by Madame la Comtesse de —— herself, whom I look upon to be the greatest judge of male merit on the face of the globe.

“It is not for loving him I am angry with you, but for entertaining so ridiculous a thought as that of marrying him. You have only one rational step to take: marry Lord Melvin, who has title and fortune, requisites not to be dispensed with in a husband, and take Harry Mandeville for your cecisbeo.”

The dear creature was immensely displeased, as you, who know the romantic turn of her imagination, will easily conceive.

Oh, I had almost forgot—yes, indeed, you have great right to give yourself jealous airs: we have not heard of your coquetry with Miss Truman. My correspondent tells me, there is no doubt of its being a real passion on both sides, and that the Truman family have been making private inquiries into your fortune. I shewed Lady Julia the letter, and you cannot conceive how prettily she blushed.

But, to be grave, I am afraid you have nothing to fear from Lord Melvin. You must forgive my making use of this expression: for, as I see no possibility of surmounting the obstacles which oppose your union with Lady Julia, I am too much a friend to both, not to wish earnestly to break a connexion which has not a shadow of hope to support it.

But a truce to this subject, which is not a pleasant one to either of us.

I told you in my last I had something to say to you. As I am your confidante, you must consent to be mine, having a little present occasion for your services. You are to know, my dear Harry, that with all my coquetry, I am as much in love as yourself, and with almost as little prospect of success:

this odious money is absolutely the bane of us true lovers, and always contrives to stand in our way.

My dear spouse then, who in the whole course of our acquaintance did but one obliging thing, being kindly determined I should neither be happy with him nor without him, obligingly, though nobody knows this but myself and the *caro* Belville, made my jointure what it is, on condition I never married again: on observance of which condition, it was to be in my power to give the estate to whoever I pleased at my death, but, on a proof of my supposed future marriage, it was to go immediately to a niece of his, who at his death was in a convent in France, who is ignorant of this condition, and whose whole present fortune scarce amounts to fifteen hundred pounds. She is both in person and in mind one of the most lovely of women, and has an affection for me, which inclines me to think she would come into measures for my sake, in which I shall make it her interest to acquiesce for her own.

Belville's fortune is extremely moderate; and if I marry him at present, I shall not add a shilling to it: his income will remain *in statu quo*, with the incumbrance of an indigent woman of quality, whose affairs are a little *derangé*, and amongst whose virtues œconomy was never one of the most observable. He would with transport marry me to-morrow, even on these hard conditions: but how little should I deserve so generous a passion, if I suffered it to seduce him to his ruin! I have written to my niece to come to England, when I shall tell her my passion for Belville, and propose to her a private agreement to divide the fortune, which will be forfeited to her on my marriage, and which it is in my power by living single to deprive her of for ever. Incapable, however, of injustice, I have at all events made a will, dividing it equally between her and Belville, if I die

unmarried : I have a right to do this for the man I love, as my father left thirty thousand pounds to Mr. Wilmot, which in equity ought to be regarded as mine, and which is all I desire on the division. She therefore, by my will, has all she ever can expect, even from the strictest justice ; and she can never, I think, hesitate between waiting till my death, and at my mercy, and receiving at the present the utmost she could then hope for.

I have heard from the lady to whom I inclosed my letter, which she has returned, my niece having left France a year ago, to accompany a relation into Italy. What I, therefore, have to ask of you is, to endeavour to find her out by your Italian friends, as I will by mine at the same time : that I may write to her to return immediately to England, as I will not run the hazard of mentioning the subject in a letter. She is the daughter of the late Colonel Hastings, once abroad in a public character, and well known in Italy.

Belville is not at all in the secret of my scheme : nor did I ever tell him I would marry him, though I sometimes give him reason to hope.

I am too good a politician in love matters ever to put a man out of doubt till half an hour before the ceremony. The moment a woman is weak enough to promise, she sets the heart of her lover at rest ; the chase, and of consequence the pleasure, is at an end ; and he has nothing to do but to seek a new object, and begin the pursuit over again.

I tell you, but I tell it in confidence ; that if I find Bell Hastings, if she comes into my scheme, and my mind does not change, I may perhaps do Belville the honour—And yet, when I reflect on the matter ; on the condition of the obligation, “so long as ye both shall live”—*Jesu Maria!* Only think of promising to be of the same mind as long as one

lives ! My dear Harry, people may talk as they will, but the thing is utterly impossible.

Adieu, mon cher ami.

A. WILMOT.

TO GEORGE MORDAUNT, ESQ.

I HAVE already told you I came hither with a view of engaging Lord T——'s interest in support of those views on which all my hopes of happiness depend. The friendship he has ever professed for me has been warm, as that of a father. I was continually with him at Rome, and he there pressed me to accept those services I then never expected to have occasion for. Till now, content with my situation, love first raised in me the spirit of ambition, and determined me to accept those offers. In a former letter, I told you I was going to follow Lord T—— into the garden, to communicate to him my purpose of pushing my fortune in the world : on which I had before given general hints, which he seemed to approve, as a kind of spirit becoming a young man, warm with hope, and not destitute of merit.

On revolving my scheme as I approached him, it appeared so romantic, so void of all rational hope, that I had not resolution to mention it, and determined at least to suspend it till better digested, and more fitted to bear the cool eye of impartial reason : in these sentiments I should still have remained, had not a letter from Lady Anne Wilmot, by giving me jealousy, determined me not to defer one moment a design on which all my happiness depended.

I therefore, with some hesitation, this morning opened all my heart, and the real state of my circumstances, to Lord T——, concealing only what

related to Lady Julia. He heard me with great coolness, carelessly lolling on a settee; his eyes fixed on a new Chinese summer-house opposite the window near which he sat, and made me the following answer: "Your views, Mr. Mandeville, seem rather romantic, for a man who has no party connexions and so little parliamentary interest. However, you are of a good family, and there are things to be had in time, if properly recommended. Have you no friend who would mention you to the minister?" He then rang the bell hastily for his valet, and retired to dress; leaving me motionless with astonishment and indignation.

We met no more till dinner, when he treated me with a distant civility, the meaning of which was easily understood. He apologized, with an air of ceremony, on his being forced to go for a fortnight to Scarborough, with a party, who, being all strangers, he was afraid would not be agreeable to me; but, at his return, he should be glad of the honour of seeing me again. I bowed coldly, and took no other notice of what he said, than to order my chaise immediately; on which he pressed my stay to-night, but in vain. The servants leaving the room, he was a little disconcerted, but observed, "He was sorry for me; my case was really hard: he always thought my fortune much larger; wondered at my father's indiscretion, in educating me so improperly—people ought to consider their circumstances—it was pity I had no friend—Lord Belmont, if he pleased; but he was so absurdly fond of his independence."

During his harangue, I entirely recovered my presence of mind; and with an air of great ease and unconcern told his lordship, "I was much obliged to him for curing me of a pursuit so improper for a man of my temper: that the liberal offers of service he had formerly made me at Rome had betrayed

me into a false opinion of the friendship of great men ; but that I was now convinced of what value such professions are, and that they are only made where it seems certain they will never be accepted—that it was impossible his lordship could judge properly of the conduct of a man of my father's character—that I was proud of being son to the most exalted and generous of mankind ; and would not give up that honour to be first minister to the first prince on earth—that I never so strongly felt the value of independence as at that moment, and did not wonder at the value Lord Belmont set on so inestimable a blessing."

I came away without waiting for an answer, and stopped at an inn about ten miles off, where I am now waiting for one of my servants, whom I left behind to bring me a letter I expect to-day from Lady Anne Wilmot.

And now, my dear Mordaunt, what will become of your unhappy friend ? The flattering hopes I fondly entertained are dispersing like a flitting cloud. Lord T——'s behaviour has removed the veil which love had spread over the wildness of my design, and convinced me that success is impossible. Where or to whom shall I now apply ?—Lord T——was him on whose friendship I most depended ; whose power to serve me was greatest, and whose professions gave me most right to expect his services.

I here for ever give up all views—Can I then calmly give up the hopes of Lady Julia ? I will go back, confess my passion to Lord Belmont, and throw myself on that goodness whose first delight is that of making others happy. Yet can I hope he will give his daughter, the heiress of such affluence—Disinterested and noble as he is, the false maxims of the world—Mordaunt, I am born to wretchedness—What have I gained by inspiring the most angelic

of women with pity? I have doomed to misery her for whose happiness I would sacrifice my life.

The servant I left at Lord T——'s is this moment arrived: he has brought me a letter—I know not why, but my hand trembles, I have scarce power to break the seal.

“ TO HENRY MANDEVILLE, ESQ.

“ Summon all your resolution, my dear Mr. Mandeville—sure my fears were prophetic—do not be too much alarmed—Lady Julia is well: she is in tears by me; she disapproves her father's views; she begs me to assure you, her heart is not less sensible than yours will be to so cruel a stroke; begs you not to return yet to Belmont, but to depend on her affection, and leave your fate in her hands.

“ The inclosed letters will acquaint you with what I have been for some time in apprehension of. With such a design for his daughter, why did my Lord bring you to Belmont? So formed to inspire love as you both are, why did he expose you to danger it was scarce possible for you to escape?

“ But it is now too late to wish you had never met: all my hopes are in your resolution: I dare expect nothing from Lady Julia's.”

“ TO THE EARL OF BELMONT.

“ MY LORD,

September 10.

“ Your lordship's absence, and the death of my mother, which renders my estate more worthy Lady Julia, has hitherto prevented my explanation of an unguarded expression, which I find has had the misfortune to displease you. I am far from intending—your lordship entirely mistakes me—no man can be more sensible of the honour of your lordship's

alliance, or of Lady Julia's uncommon perfections : but a light way of talking, which one naturally acquires in the world, has led me undesignedly into some appearance of disrespect to a state of the felicity of which I have not the least doubt.

" I flatter myself your lordship will, on cooler reflection, forgive an unguarded word, and allow me to hope for the honour of convincing you and the lady, by my future conduct, that no man has a higher idea of matrimonial happiness, than,

" My lord,

" Your lordship's most devoted

" and very obedient servant,

" FONDVILLE."

" TO LORD VISCOUNT FONDVILLE.

" MY LORD,

" I readily admit your lordship's apology, as I am under no apprehension any man can intend to slight the alliance of one who has always endeavoured his character should be worthy his birth, and the rank he has the honour to hold in his country.

" As I love the plainest dealing in affairs of such consequence, I will not a moment deceive your lordship, or suffer you to engage in a pursuit, which, if I have any influence over my daughter, will prove unsuccessful ; not from any disesteem of your lordship, but because I have another view for her, the disappointment of which would destroy all my hopes of a happy evening of life, and embitter my last hours. I have long intended her, with her own approbation, which her filial piety gives me no room to doubt, for the son of my friend, the heir of an earldom, and of an affluent fortune ; and, what I

much more value, of uncommon merit, and one of the first families in the kingdom.

"I am sure your lordship will not endeavour to oppose a design which has been long formed, is far advanced, and on which I have so much set my heart.

"I am, my lord, with great regard,

"Your lordship's very obedient

"and devoted servant,

"BELMONT."

"I have long, my dear Mr. Mandeville, suspected my lord's design in favour of Lord Melvin, of which there is not now the least doubt. Our coming away from his father's, on his arrival, was a circumstance which then struck me extremely. Lady Julia's stay there, on this supposition, would have been ill suited to the delicacy of her sex and rank. Yet I am astonished my lord has not sooner told her of it; but there is no accounting for the caprice of age. How shall I tell my dear Mr. Mandeville my sentiments on this discovery? How shall I, without wounding a passion which bears no restraint, hint to him my wishes, that he would sacrifice that love, which can only by its continuance make him wretched, to Lady Julia's peace of mind? that he would himself assist her to conquer an inclination which is incompatible with the views which the most indulgent of parents entertains for her happiness; views, the disappointment of which, he has declared, will embitter his last hours? Make one generous effort, my amiable friend: it is glorious to conquer where conquest is most difficult. Think of Lord Belmont's friendship; of his almost parental care of your fortune; of the pleasure with which he talks of your virtues, and it will be impossible for you to continue

to oppose that design on which his hopes of a happy evening of life are founded. Would you deny a happy evening to that life to which thousands owe the felicity of theirs?

“It is from you, and not Lady Julia, I expect this sacrifice. The consideration which will most strongly influence you to make it, will for ever prevent her: it pains me to wound your delicacy, by saying I mean the difference of your fortunes. From a romantic generosity, she will think herself obliged to that perseverance, which the same generosity now calls loudly on you to decline. If you have greatness of mind to give up hopes which can never be accomplished, time and absence may assist Lady Julia’s filial sweetness, and bring her to a compliance with her father’s will. Believe that whilst I write, my heart melts with compassion for you both; and that nothing but the tenderest friendship could have urged me to so painful a task. I am, &c.

“A. WILMOT.”

O, Mordaunt! till now I was never truly wretched. I have not even a glimpse of hope remaining: I must give up the only wish for which life is worth my care, or embitter the last hours of the man who with unequalled generosity has pleaded my cause against himself, and declined a noble acquisition of fortune, that it might give consequence, and, as he thought, happiness to me.

But Lady Julia!—Heaven is my witness, to make her happy, I would this moment give up all my rights in her heart. I would myself lead her to the altar, though the same hand the next moment—Mordaunt, I will promise, if she request it, to consent to her marriage; but I will not to survive it. My thoughts are all distraction—I cannot write to Lady Anne—I will write to the most lovely of women—she knows

not the cruel request of her friend—her love disdains the low consideration of wealth—our hearts were formed for each other—she knows every sentiment of my soul—she knows, that were I monarch of the world—O, Mordaunt, is it possible—can the gentle, the indulgent Lord Belmont—but all conspires to undo me: the best, the most mild of mankind is turned a tyrant to make me wretched. I will know from herself if she consents: I will give up my own hopes to her happiness; but let me first be convinced it is indeed her happiness, not the prejudices of her father, to which I make so cruel a sacrifice.

I have written to Lady Julia, and am more calm. I have mentioned Lady Anne's request: I have told her, that, though without hope, if I am still blest in her affection, I will never resign her but with life: but if she can be happy with Lord Melvin, if she asks it, she is this moment free. I have entreated her to consult her own heart, without a thought of me; that I would die this moment to contribute to her peace; that the first purpose of my life is her happiness, with which my own shall never come in competition: that there is nothing I will ever refuse her, but to cease to think of her with adoration; that if she wishes to marry Lord Melvin (Great Heaven! is it possible she can wish it?), I will return to Italy, and carry far from her a passion which can never cease but in the grave.

I will wait here an answer, and then determine where to go.

TO COLONEL BELVILLE.

Thursday.

EMILY Howard came last night. Lady Julia and she are reading natural history with my lord, and examining butterflies' wings in a microscope—a pretty innocent amusement to keep young ladies out of mischief. I wish my lord had thought of it sooner; it might have been of great use to Lady Julia: if one is but amused, it is of no great consequence whether by a butterfly or a lover.

Vastly severe that last sentence: it must be allowed I have a pretty genius for satire.

My lord certainly intends Lady Julia for Lord Melvin. I have wrote Harry a ridiculous wise letter, persuading him to sacrifice his own passion to my lord's caprice; and giving him advice which I should hate him if I thought him capable of following. How easy it is to be wise for any body but one's self! I suppose Harry could with great calmness preach on the imprudence of my attachment to you.

We are going to a strolling play to-night. My lord encourages diversions on his estate, on the same principle that a wise prince protects the fine arts, to keep his people at home.

We had a family to dine here yesterday, who are very agreeable people, and to whom my lord shewed a particular attention. Mr. Barker, the father, is the most bearable man I have seen in this country; and the daughters vastly above the style of the misses here. Lady Belmont intends to take them this winter with her to town, as she does every year some gentleman's daughter in her neighbourhood.

Adieu! I am peevish beyond measure, and scarce know what I would be at. Have you never these

kinds of feels? never fretful you cannot tell why? It is well for you you are not here: a lover and a favourite lap-dog have a dreadful life on these occasions; or indeed any animal we can use ill with impunity. Strangely severe to-day: do not you perceive it?

Six o'clock.

Ten thousand times more peevish than ever: we have just had a visit from "the best kind of woman in the world," and her daughter, "an amiable and accomplished young lady," who writes verses and journals, paints, makes shell-flowers, cuts paper, and has "every qualification to render the marriage state happy;" talks of the charms of rural retirement, the pleasures of reflection, the beauties of the mind; and sings, "Love's a gentle generous passion." It was not in nature to have stood it a quarter of an hour. Heaven be praised! the play hour is come, and the coaches are at the door.

Eleven o'clock.

We have seen them act Juliet and Romeo. Lady Julia seemed to sympathize with the heroine:

"I'll not wed Paris; Romeo is my husband."

Buona notte.

TO COLONEL BELVILLE.

WE have been all extremely busy to-day, celebrating a harvest-home. A long procession of our village youths, all drest gaily in fine shirts, adorned with ribands, paired with the handsomest of the country girls, in white jackets and petticoats, garlands of flowers and wheat-ears on their heads, their rakes

streaming with various-coloured ribands, which glittered in the sun-beams, preceded the harvest cart; on which, in a bower of green boughs, stood a beautiful little girl, drest in the rural style with inimitable elegance, by the hand of Lady Julia herself. The gay procession walked slowly through the village; a tabor and pipe playing before them, till they came before the house, where they danced a thousand little rustic dances, the novelty of which charmed me extremely: they then adjourned to the hall, where a plentiful feast was provided, and where the whole village were that night my lord's guests.

Lord Belmont is extremely fond of all these old customs, and will suffer none of them to be left off on his estate. "The prospect of this festivity," he says, "cheers them in their labour, and is a laudable tribute of gladness to that beneficent Being, to whose bounty we owe the full reward of our toil, the plentiful harvest, and who rejoices in the happiness of his creatures.

"Besides," says my lord, "all these amusements encourage a spirit of matrimony, and increase the number of my people."

"And pray, my dear lord, do they encourage no other spirit?"

"No, madam: Lady Belmont's anger and mine would, in such a case, they know, contrary to that of the world, fall chiefly where it ought, on the seducer, who would be for ever expelled my estate, the heaviest punishment I could possibly inflict. Then, as I am a declared enemy to interested marriages, the young people are allowed to choose for themselves, which removes the temptation to vice, which is generally caused by the shameful avarice of parents.

"Our example too is of great service, and allures them to a regular behaviour. They think that must

be the happiest life which we, who have the power of choosing, prefer; and, therefore, it is the fashion amongst them to be regular, and seek their happiness, as we do, at home."

I believe my lord is right. I am well pleased, too, he throws the blame on you he-wretches, and excuses the poor lasses. In the eye of the world it is, to be sure, *toute au contraire*; but my Lord and Lady Belmont are so singular as to see with their own eyes.

Adieu! We are all to go down one dance with the villagers; and I hear the tabor and pipe.

O, Heavens! a coach and six! the Mandeville livery! a running footman! It must be Lady Mary: I will inquire. It is herself; my lord flies to receive her in the court; Lady Belmont and Lady Julia are at the door; she alights. I never saw her before: her figure is striking, full of dignity, and that grace which is almost lost in this generation: she enters the house, leaning on my lord. I am grieved Harry is gone; I wished her to be some time with him; she only just saw him as he came through London in his way to Belmont.

But I must go to pay my respects. Adieu!

TO GEORGE MORDAUNT, ESQ.

Tuesday, September 14.

As I was sitting alone this morning at the inn looking out at a window, I saw ride into the yard Mr. Herbert, the gentleman to whom I took so strong an inclination at Lord T——'s, and for whose character I have the highest esteem. He saw me, and, springing eagerly from his horse, sent to know if I would admit him. He came, and, after expressing

some surprise at seeing me there, on my telling him I had left Lord T——'s, and waited there a few days for letters, he insisted on my spending that time at his house, in a manner which was impossible for me to refuse. As we rode, he apologized for the entertainment I should meet with; wished for a larger share of the gifts of fortune, that he might receive his friends in a manner more suited to his desires; but said, "If he knew me, the heart of the host was all I should care for; and that I should relish the homely meal of cheerful friendship, as well as the splendid profusion of luxury and pride."

We arrived at a neat house, with a little romantic garden behind it, where we were received by Mrs. Herbert with that hospitable air which is inseparable from real benevolence of heart. Her person was extremely pleasing, and her dress elegantly plain. She had a little boy sitting by her, lovely and playful as a Cupid.

Neatness and propriety presided at our frugal meal; and, after a little dessert of excellent fruit from their garden, Mr. Herbert took me the tour of his estate, which consists of about seventy acres, which he cultivates himself, and has embellished with every thing that can make it lovely: all has the appearance of content and peace. I observed this to him, and added, that "I infinitely envied his happiness." He stopped, and looked earnestly at me. "I am indeed," said he, "happy in many things; and, though my fortune is greatly below my birth and hopes, I am not in want: things may be better; till then, I bear them as I can: my wife, whose worth outweighs all praise, combats our ill fate with a spirit I cannot always imitate; for her, Mr. Mandeville, for her I feel with double keenness the stings of adversity."

I observed him too much affected to pursue the

subject farther ; I therefore changed it, and returned to the house : but I will not leave him till I am instructed how to draw the worm of discontent from one of the worthiest of human bosoms.

Write to me here. I shall stay till I know when my father will be in the country. Adieu !

TO COLONEL BELVILLE.

Wednesday.

I AM charmed with Lady Mary ; her address is easy, polite, attentive : she is tall, brown, well made, and perfectly graceful ; her air would inspire awe, if not softened by the utmost sweetness and affability of behaviour. She has great vivacity in her looks and manner ; her hair is quite white ; her eyes have lost their lustre, yet it is easy to see she has been very handsome : her hand and arm are yet lovely, of which she is not a little vain : take her for all in all, she is the finest ruin I ever beheld.

She is full of anecdotes of the queen's time, chosen with judgment, and told with spirit, which makes her conversation infinitely amusing. She has been saying so many fine things of Harry, who by the way strongly resembles her, that I begin to think the good old lady has a matrimonial design upon him : really not amiss such a scheme ; fine remains, an affluent fortune, and as to years, eighty is absolutely the best age I know for a wife, except eighteen. She thinks him, what is extremely in his favour, very like her brother, who was killed at the battle of Almanza.

She has the talkativeness of age, which, where there is sense and knowledge of the world, I do not dislike : she is learned in genealogy, and can tell you

not only the intermarriages, but the family virtues and vices, of every ancient house in the kingdom : as to the modern ones, she does not think them worth studying. I am high in her favour, because my blood has never been contaminated by a city marriage. She tells me, the women of my family have always been famous for a certain ease and *bon air*, which she is glad to see is not lost ; and that my grandmother was the greatest ornament of Queen Mary's court.

She has a great contempt for the present race of beauties ; says the very idea of grace is almost lost, and that we see nothing now but mere pretty women ; that she can only account for this, by supposing the trifling turn of their minds gives an insignificance to their persons ; and that she would advise them to learn to think and act, in order to their being able to look and move with dignity. " You, nephew," she says, " who remember each bright Churchill of the galaxy, will readily come into my opinion."

She does me the honour, however, to say I am the most graceful woman she has seen since the queen's time.

She is a great politician, and something inclined to be a tory, though she professes perfect impartiality ; loves the king, and idolizes the queen, because she thinks she sees in her the sweet affability so admired in her favourite Queen Mary—for-gives the cuts for their opposition to peace, because they get more money by war, the criterion by which they judge every thing ; but is amazed that the nobles, born guardians of the just rights of the throne, the fountain of all their honours, should join these interested 'Change-alley politicians, and endeavour, from private pique, to weaken the hands of their sovereign : but adds with a sigh, that mankind were

always alike, and that it was just so in the queen's time.

“ But pray, nephew, this Canada ;—I remember, when Hill was sent against it in the queen's time, it was thought of great consequence ; and two or three years ago pamphlets were written, I am told, by men very well born, to prove it was the only point we ought to have in view ; but a point in which we could scarce hope to succeed. Is it really so trifling an acquisition ? And how comes the nature of it to be so changed now we are likely to keep it ? ”

“ The terms of peace talked of, madam,” said Lord Belmont, “ if we consider them in the only just light, their relation to the end for which war was undertaken, are such as wisdom and equity equally dictate. Canada, considered merely as the possession of it gives security to our colonies, is of more national consequence to us than all the sugar-islands on the globe. But if the present inhabitants are encouraged to stay, by the mildness of our laws, and that full liberty of conscience to which every rational creature has a right ; if they are taught, by every honest art, a love for that constitution which makes them free, and a personal attachment to the best of princes ; if they are allured to our religious worship, by seeing it in its genuine beauty, equally remote from their load of trifling ceremonies and the unornamented forms of the Dissenters : if population is encouraged ; the wastelands settled ; and a whale fishery set on foot, we shall find it, considered in every light, an acquisition beyond our most sanguine hopes ! ”

O Ciel ! I am tired. Adieu !

A. WILMOT.

TO GEORGE MORDAUNT, ESQ.

I AM still with Mr. Herbert, whose genius, learning, and goodness of heart, make him an honour to human nature itself. I shall never know peace till I find a way to render his situation more worthy of his character.

It was with great difficulty I drew from him the following short account of himself.

“ There is nothing in my past life but what is, I fear, too usual to be worth relating. Warmth of temper, and the vanity of youth, seduced me into a circle of company not to be kept up by one of my fortune at a less price than ruin; and the same vanity, with inexperience and a false opinion of mankind, betrayed me into views not less destructive.

“ My father unhappily died when I was about nineteen, leaving me at college, master of my own actions, of the little estate you see, and of four thousand pounds; a sum I then thought inexhaustible. The reputation of such a sum in my own power drew about me all the worthless young men of fashion in the university, whose persuasions and examples led me into a train of expense to which my fortune was far from being equal: they flattered those talents of which I thought but too well myself, and easily persuaded me I only wanted to be known in the great world, to rise to what height I pleased. I accompanied them to town, full of the idea of raising my fortune, to which they assured me nothing so much contributed as the appearance of being perfectly at ease. To this end I launched into every expense they proposed: dress, equipage, play, and every fashionable extravagance. I was well received every where, and thought my designs in a prosperous way. I found my fortune, however, decaying at the end

of two years, but had not courage to inquire into particulars: till, drawing upon my banker for money to pay some debts I had unwarily contracted, he told me he had already paid the whole.

“ It was some time before he could convince me of this; but, finding his accounts had all the appearance of exactness, I was obliged to acquiesce, and went home in an agony of despair. Unable to quit a way of life which was become habitual, and which it was now impossible to support without dishonesty, there is no describing my feelings. After revolving a thousand different schemes in my imagination, I determined to conceal the situation of my affairs, to sell my estate, and, before that money was gone, press my great friends to serve me.

“ I applied to my banker, who undertook to send me a purchaser: but, before I had completed my design, I received by the post a bank-note of five hundred pounds, the sum I was indebted in town; with a letter, in a hand unknown to me, representing, in the most delicate manner, the imprudence of my past conduct, the madness of my views, and the certain consequences of my parting with this my last stake: entreating me, by the memory of my parents, to preserve this sacred deposit, this little remain, of what their tender care had left me.

“ Melted with this generosity, struck with the just reproof, yet chained down to that world which had undone me; convinced, yet irresolute, I struggled with my own heart to determine on retiring into the country: but, to postpone as long as possible a retreat which I could not bear to think of, resolved first to try my great friends, and be certain of what I had to hope for. I represented to them the necessity of immediately attempting in earnest to push my fortune; and, pressing them closely, found their promises were air. They talked in ge-

neral terms of their esteem for me, of my merit ; and each of them expressed the warmest desire of seeing me served by any means but his own. In order to animate their languid friendship, I discovered to them the real state of my affairs : and from that moment found myself avoided by them all : they dropped me by degrees ; were never at home when I called ; and at length ceased even to bow to me in public. Ashamed of their own baseness in thus cruelly deserting me after leading me into ruin, most of them sought to excuse it, by blackening my character ; whilst the best of them affected coldly to pity me, as a vain foolish fellow, who had undone himself by forgetting his own primeval situation, and arrogantly presuming to live with them.

“ Burning with indignation, I determined at once to break the bands which held me captive. I sold my equipage, discharged my debts, and came down to this place, resolved to find out to whom I had been so obliged, and, by living on half my income, to repay this generous benefactor.

“ I took lodgings in a farm-house, and soon found that peace of mind to which I had long been a stranger. I tried every method to find out to whom I was indebted for an act of such exalted friendship, but in vain ; till one day, a relation being present, of whom I had some suspicion, I related the story, as of another, keeping my eyes fixed upon him : he remained perfectly unmoved ; but happening to turn my head, I saw a confusion in the air of a young lady in the room with whom I had been bred in the greatest intimacy, which excited all my attention. She saw me observe her, and a blush overspread her cheek, which convinced me I had found the object of my search. I changed the subject ; and the next morning made her a visit, when I with great difficulty drew from her a confession, that, having long

had a tender esteem for me, she had, by a friend in town, watched all my actions ; that my banker had applied to that very friend to purchase my estate ; on which, seeing me on the brink of absolute ruin, she had taken what appeared to her the most probable means to prevent it ; and was so happy as to see she had succeeded.

“ I dare say I need not tell you this noble creature was my dear Mrs. Herbert ; the smallness of whose fortune added infinitely to the generosity of the action, what she had sent me being within a trifle her all.

“ I loved, I addressed her, and at length was so happy as to call her mine. Blest in the most exalted passion for each other, a passion which time has rather increased than abated, the narrowness of our circumstances is the only ill we have to complain of : even this we have borne with cheerfulness, in the hope of happier days. A late accident has, however, broken in upon that tranquillity with which Heaven has hitherto blessed us. It is now about six months since a lady, who tenderly esteemed us both, sent for me, and acquainted me she had procured for me, of a gentleman whose family had been obliged to her, a living of above three hundred pounds a year, in a beautiful situation ; and desired I would immediately take orders. As I was originally educated with a view to the church, I consented with inexpressible joy ; blessing that Heaven which had thus rewarded my Sophia's generous affection, and given us all that was wanting to complete our happiness. I set out for Loudon with an exulting heart ; where, after being ordained, I received the presentation, and went down to take possession. The house was large and elegant, and betrayed me into furnishing it rather better than suited my present circumstances ; but, as I deter-

mined on the utmost frugality for some years, I thought this of little consequence. I set men to work in the garden ; and wrote my wife an account of our new residence, which made her eager to hasten her removal. The day of my coming for my family was fixed, when my patron came down to his seat, which was within sight of the rectory : I waited on him, and found him surrounded by wretches to whom it was scarce possible to give the name of human ; profligate, abandoned, lost even to the sense of shame : their conversation wounded reason, virtue, politeness, and all that mankind agree to hold sacred. My patron, the wealthy heir of a West Indian, was raised above them only by fortune and a superior degree of ignorance and savage insensibility. He received me with an insolence which I found great difficulty in submitting to ; and, after some brutal general reflections on the clergy, dared to utter expressions relating to the beauty of my wife, which fired my soul with indignation : breathless with rage, I had not power to reply ; when one of the company speaking low to him, he answered aloud, " Hark you, Herbert, this blockhead thinks a parson a gentleman ; and wonders at my treating as I please a fellow who eats my bread."

" ' I will sooner want bread, Sir,' said I, rising, ' than owe it to the most contemptible of mankind. Your living is once more at your disposal : I resign all right to it before this company.'

" The pleasure of having acted as I ought swelled my bosom with conscious delight, and supported me till I reached home, when my heart sunk at the thought of what my Sophia might feel from the disappointment. Our affairs too were a little embarrassed, from which misery I had hoped to be set free ; instead of which, my debts were increased.

Mr. Mandeville, if you never knew the horrors of being in debt, you can form no idea of what it is to breathe the air at the mercy of another ; to labour, to struggle to be just, whilst the cruel world are loading you with the guilt of injustice.

“ I entered the house, filled with horrors not to be conceived. My wife met me with eager inquiries about our future residence, and with repeated thanks to that God who had thus graciously bestowed on us the means of doing justice to all the world. You will imagine what I felt at that moment : instead of replying, I related to her the treatment I had met with, and the character of him to whom we were to be obliged ; and asked her, what she would wish me to do ? ‘ Resign the living,’ said she, ‘ and trust to that Heaven whose goodness is over all his creatures.’ I embraced her with tears of tender transport, and told her I had already done it. We wrote to the lady to whose friendship we had been obliged for the presentation ; and she had the greatness of mind not to disapprove my conduct. We have since practised a more severe frugality, which we are determined not to relax till what we owe is fully discharged : time will, we hope, bring about this end, and remove the load which now oppresses my heart. Determined to trust to Heaven and our industry, and to aim at independence alone, I have avoided all acquaintance which could interfere with this only rational plan : but Lord T——, seeing me at the house of a nobleman whose virtues do honour to his rank, and imagining my fortune easy from my cordial reception there, invited me earnestly to his seat : where, having, as I suppose, been since undeceived as to my situation, you were a witness of his unworthy treatment of me : of one descended from a family noble as his own, liberally educated, with a spirit equally above meanness and

pride, and a heart which feels too sensibly to be happy in a world like this.

"Oh, Mr. Mandeville! what can you think of him, who, instead of pouring out his soul in thankfulness to Heaven for those advantages he enjoys by his goodness above his fellow-creatures, makes use of them to wound the bosom of the wretched, and add double bitterness to the cup of adversity?

"The real evils of a narrow fortune are trifling; its worst pangs spring from the unfeeling cruelty of others: it is not always that philosophy can raise us above the proud man's contumely, or those thousand insults

"Which patient merit of th' unworthy takes."

"You, Mr. Mandeville, are young, and full of probity; your own heart will mislead you, by drawing too flattering a picture of others: the world is gay before you; and, blinded by prosperity, you have never yet seen it as it is. I have heard you with infinite concern hint designs too like my own. Let me entreat, let me conjure you, to profit by my example. If peace is worth your care, be content with your paternal fortune, however small; nor, by rashly launching on the flattering sea of hope, hazard that shipwreck which I have suffered."

Mordaunt, is not this the voice of Heaven? I will return to the bosom of independence, and give up designs in which it is almost impossible for modest worth to succeed.

My father is in town: I will go to him when he returns; his advice shall determine my future conduct.

A letter from Lady Julia: my servant has this moment brought it from Lord T——'s, whither I

desired it to be directed ; not choosing to let them know I have put an end to my visit, lest Lord Belmont should insist on my return.

“ TO HENRY MANDEVILLE, ESQ.

“ In what words shall I assure the most amiable of men he has nothing to fear from Lord Melvin ? If he knows my heart, he knows it incapable of change ; he knows, not his own generous spirit more disdains the low consideration of fortune ; he knows I can have but one wish, that this accidental advantage were on his side, that he might taste the transport of obliging her he loves.

“ My duty, my gratitude to the best of parents, forbids my entering into present engagements without his knowledge ; nor will I make future ones, which would have in view an event on which I cannot think without horror : but his commands, were he capable of acting so inconsistently with his past indulgent goodness, would be insufficient to make me give my hand to Lord Melvin, when my heart is fixedly another's.

“ I may, perhaps, assume courage to own my sensibility, a sensibility justified by such merit in the object, to the tenderest of mothers and friends. In the mean time, defer your return to Belmont, and hope every thing from time, my father's friendship, and my unalterable esteem—esteem did I say ? Where did I learn this coldness of expression ? Let me own, though I am covered with blushes whilst I write, it is from my love, my ardent love, from a passion which is the pride and boast of my life, that the most charming of mankind has every thing to hope—if his happiness depends on my affection, he is happy.

"You shall hear *of* me by Lady Anne and my beloved Emily: at present, you will not ask to hear *from* me.

"Adieu!"

O, Mordaunt! how shall I restrain the wild transports of my heart! "her love, her most ardent love!"—How could I suspect her truth?—No, my friend, I ask no more; I will not return to Belmont: certain of her tenderness, I submit, without repining, to her commands.

Unable, however, to resist the desire of being near her, I will go privately to a little farm, four miles from Belmont, of which it has a view; which is rented by an old servant of my father's, whose son is in love with one of Lady's Belmont's maids, and from whom I shall hear daily accounts of Lady Julia: as it is near the road, I may even have a chance of seeing her pass by.

I shall leave my servants at the inn, and order all my letters hither: Mr. Herbert will convey them to me, and keep the secret of my retreat.

Great Heaven! I shall to-night be near her! I shall behold the turrets of Belmont! it is even possible I may see the dear object of all my wishes. A thousand sweet ideas rise in my mind. My heart dances with pleasure.

Mordaunt, she loves me! she will never be another's.

This passion absorbs me wholly: I had almost forgot my friend; go to my banker's; take a hundred pounds, and send it by the post to Mr. Herbert, without letting him know from whom it comes. Why is this trifle all that is in my power to do for worth like his? If a happier fate—but let me not encourage the sanguine hopes of youth.

I will introduce him to Lord Belmont, the friend

of virtue, the support of the unhappy, the delegate of Heaven itself. Adieu !

Your faithful

H. MANDEVILLE.

TO COLONEL BELVILLE.

Thursday.

A PRETTY sentimental letter your last, and would make an admirable figure in a true history of Cela-don and Urania !—Absolutely though, Belville, for people who have sensibility, and so little prospect of coming together in an honourable way, we are a most extraordinary pair of lovers. And yet the world—*à propos* to the world, a French author I am reading, says, “A wise writer, to divert the fury of criticism from his works, should throw in now and then an indiscretion in his conduct to play with, as seamen do a tub to the whale.”

Do not you think this might be an useful hint to us beauties? If I treat the good old ladies sometimes with a little imprudence in regard to you, my complexion may escape the better for it.

We are just returned from a party on the water, which, like most concerted parties, turned out exceedingly dull. We had gilded barges, excellent music, an elegant repast, and all that could invite pleasure amongst us : but whether her ladyship be a true coquette, flying fastest when pursued, or what is the reason I know not, but certain it is, one seldom finds her when one goes to seek her ; her visits are generally spontaneous and unexpected ; she rejects all invitations, and comes upon you, in her own way, by surprise. I set off in high spirits, my heart beating with expectation, and never passed a

more languid day. I fancied every moment would be pleasanter, but found the last hour as spiritless as the first. I saw chagrin and disappointment in the eyes of half the company, especially the young part of it. Lady Julia seemed to say, "All this would be charming, if Harry Mandeville was here." My own ideas were something similar; I could not keep my imagination from wandering a little to Grosvenor-street. Most of the misses were in the same situation, whilst the good old people seemed perfectly satisfied; which convinces me that, at a certain time of life, there is no pleasure without the heart: where that is untouched, and takes no part in your amusements, all is still-life and vegetation; it is in vain to expect enjoyment from outward objects, where the soul is from home.

I missed my sweet Harry exceedingly; for, though not a lover, he is a divine fellow; and there is something vastly amusing in having so agreeable an object before one's eyes.

Whenever I make a party of pleasure, it shall consist all of lovers, who have not met for a twelvemonth.

Who should we meet on our return, but Fondville, in a superb barge, full of company, dying at the feet of the *cittadina*, who was singing a melting Italian air! Yes, we are to be Lady Viscountess Fondville; all is agreed, the clothes bespoke, our very garters interwoven with coronets. I shall get off before the days of visitation, for there will be no supporting *Madame la Vicomtesse*.

I have been talking half an hour *tête-à-tête* with Lady Mary, and have let her into the secret of little Westbrook's passion for Harry. She drew up at the very mention; was astonished that a creature of yesterday could think of mixing her blood with that of Mandeville; and declared she knew but twenty

houses in Europe into which she should ever consent to Harry's marrying.

I took this opportunity of giving a hint of his inclination for Lady Julia, but am doubtful whether she understood me. Oh, that he had Lord Melvin's expectations! But why do I wish for impossibilities? Let me rather wish, what is next to impossible, that Lord Belmont would overlook the want of them!

Adieu!

TO COLONEL BELVILLE.

Thursday evening.

O Ciel! une aventure! Making use of the sweet liberty of Belmont, which has no rule but that of the Thelemites, "Do what thou wilt," I left them after dinner to settle family affairs, and ordered my chariot to take a solitary airing. An old cat, however, arriving just as it came to the door, who is a famous proficient in scandal, a treat I am absolutely deprived of at Belmont, I changed my mind, and asked her to accompany me, that I might be amused with the secret history of all the neighbourhood.

She had torn to pieces half a dozen of the prettiest women about us, when, passing through a little village about six miles from Belmont, I was struck with the extreme neatness of a small house and garden near the road. There was an elegant plainness in the air of it, which pleased me so much that I pulled the string, and ordered the coachman to stop, that I might examine it more at leisure. I was going to bid him drive on, when two women came out of an arbour, one of whom instantly engaged all my attention.

Imagine to yourself in such a place all that is

graceful and lovely in woman; an elegance of form and habit; a dignity of deportment; an air of delicate languor and sensibility, which won the heart at a look; a complexion inclining to pale; the finest dark eyes; with a countenance in which a modest sorrow, and dignified dejection, gave the strongest indications of suffering merit.

My companion, seeing the apparent partiality with which I beheld this amiable object, began to give me her history, embittered by all the virulence of malice; which, however, amounted to no more, than that she was a stranger, and that, as nobody knew who she was, they generously concluded she was one whose interest it was not to be known.

They now drew nearer to us: and the charming creature, raising her eyes, and then first seeing us, exclaimed, "Good Heaven! Lady Anne Wilmot! Is it possible?" I now regarded her more attentively; and, though greatly changed since I saw her, knew her to be Bell Hastings, Mr. Wilmot's niece, whom I had been long endeavouring to find. I sprung from the chariot to meet her, and need not tell you my transport at so unexpected a rencounter.

After the common inquiries on meeting, I expressed my surprise at finding her there, with a gentle reproach at her unkindness in being in England without letting me know it. She blushed, and seemed embarrassed at what I said; on which I changed the subject, and pressed her to accompany me immediately to Belmont, the place on earth where merit like hers was most sure of finding its best reward, esteem. She declined this proposal in a manner which convinced me she had some particular reason for refusing, which I doubted not her taking a proper time to explain, and therefore gave it up for the present. I insisted, however, on her promising to go with me to town; and that nothing but

a matrimonial engagement should separate her from me. There is no describing the excess of her gratitude; tears of tender sensibility shone in her eyes: and I could see her bosom swell with sensations to which she could not give utterance.

An hour passed without my having thought of my meager companion at the gate. I was not sorry for having accidentally mortified the envious wretch for her spite to poor Bell. However, as I would not designedly be shocking, I sent to her, and apologized for my neglect, which I excused for my joy at meeting unexpectedly with a relation for whom I had the tenderest friendship. The creature alighted at my request; and to make amends for the picture she had drawn of my amiable niece, overwhelmed her with civilities and expressions of esteem, which would have increased my contempt for her, if any thing in nature could.

After tea we returned, when I related my adventure, and, though so late, could scarce prevail on Lady Belmont to defer her visit to Bell till to-morrow. She hopes to be able to prevail on her to accompany us back to Belmont.

Adio, caro.

TO GEORGE MORDAUNT, ESQ.

I WRITE this from my new abode, a little sequestered farm, at the side of a romantic wood: there is an arbour in the thickest grove, of intermingled jessamines and roses. Here William meditates future happy hours, when joined to his lovely Anna: he has adorned it with every charm of nature, to please the mistress of his soul. Here I pass my sweetest hours: here William brings me news of Lady Julia:

he is this moment returned ; he saw her walking to the rustic temple, leaning on Emily Howard ; he tells me she sighed as she passed him. Oh ! Mor-daunt ! was that sigh for me ?

Not certain Lady Julia would forgive my being so near her, or a concealment which has so guilty an air, I have enjoined William secrecy even to his Anna, and bribed it by a promise of making him happy. My letters, therefore, come round by Mr. Herbert's, and it is three days before I receive them. I have not yet heard from Belmont, or my father. I am supposed to be still at Lord T——'s.

Ever an enthusiast from warmth of heart and imagination, my whole soul is devoted to Lady Julia. I pass my days in carving that loved name on the rinds of the smoothest trees : and, when the good old man retires to his rest, William and I steal forth, and ride to the end of Belmont park, where, having contemplated the dear abode of all that earth contains of lovely, and breathed an ardent prayer to Heaven for her happiness, I return to my rustic retreat, and wait patiently till the next evening brings back the same pleasing employment.

Since I left Belmont, I have never known happiness like what I now feel. Certain of her tenderness, tranquillity is restored to my soul : for ever employed in thinking of her, that painful restraint which company brought is removed : the scenes around me, and the dear solitude I enjoy, are proper to flatter a love-sick heart ; my passion is soothed by the artless expression of William ; I make him sit hours talking of his Anna : he brings me every day intelligence of my angel ; I see every hour the place which she inhabits. Am I not most happy ? Her idea is perpetually before me ; when I walk in these sweet shades, so resembling those of Belmont, I look round as if expecting to behold her ; I start

at every sound, and almost fancy her lovely form in my view.

Oh! Mordaunt! what transport do I find in this sweet delirium of love! how eagerly do I expect the return of evening! Could I but once again behold her! once again swear eternal passion—I have a thousand things to say.

TO COLONEL BELVILLE.

Tuesday morning.

I HAVE this moment a letter from Bell Hastings, which I send you: I wish her here, yet know not how to press it, after so rational an apology.

“ TO LADY ANNE WILMOT.

“ Before I absolutely accept or refuse your Ladyship's generous invitation, allow me to account to you for my being in a place where you so little expected to find me; but which I am convinced you will acquiesce in my continuing in, when you know the motives which induced me to make choice of it.

“ When my uncle married your ladyship, you may remember he left me in a convent at Paris, where I staid till his death. I should then have returned; but, having contracted a very great friendship for a young lady of the first quality in England, she pressed me to continue there till her return, which was fixed for the year following. About three months before we intended to leave Paris, her brother arrived, on which occasion she left the convent, and went to spend her remaining time with an aunt who then resided in France, and who, being told I had staid the last year in complaisance to her amiable

niece, insisted on my accompanying her. To spare a long narrative of common events, the brother of my friend became passionately in love with me, and I was so unhappy as to be too sensible to his tenderness : he entreated me to conceal our attachment from his sister for the present ; professed the most honourable designs ; told me, he did not doubt of bringing his father to consent to a marriage, to which there could be no objection that was not founded in the most sordid avarice, and on which the happiness of his life depended.

“ The time of our intended return to England drawing near, he employed, and successfully, the power he had over my heart to influence my acceptance of an invitation given me by a friend of my mother’s, to accompany her to Florence, where I promised to stay till his return from Rome.

“ Too much in love, as he said, and I weakly believed, to support a longer absence, he came in a few months to Florence : we were then in the country with a Florentine nobleman, whose lady was related to my friend, to whom he was strongly recommended, and who gave him an invitation to his villa ; which I need not tell you he accepted. We saw each other continually, but under a restraint which, whilst it increased our mutual passion, was equally painful to both. At length he contrived to give me a letter, pressing me to see him alone in the garden at an hour he mentioned. I went, and found the most beloved of men waiting for me in a grove of oranges. He saw me at a distance : I stopped by an involuntary impulse ; he ran to me ; he approached me with a transport which left me no room to doubt of his affection.

“ After an hour spent in vows of everlasting love, he pressed me to marry him privately ; which I refused with an air of firmness but little suited to the

state of my heart, and protested no consideration should ever induce me to give him my hand without the consent of his father.

“ He expressed great resentment of a resolution, which, he affirmed, was inconsistent with a real passion ; pretended jealousy of a young nobleman in the house, and artfully hinted at returning immediately to England ; then, softening his voice, implored my compassion, vowed he could not live without me ; and so varied his behaviour from rage to the most seducing softness, that the fear of displeasing him who was dearer to me than life, assisted by the tender persuasive eloquence of well-dissembled love, so far prevailed over the dictates of reason and strict honour, that, unable to resist his despair, I consented to a clandestine marriage : I then insisted on returning immediately to the house, to which he consented, though unwillingly ; and leaving me with all the exulting raptures of successful love, went to Florence to prepare a priest to unite us, promising to return with him in the morning : the next day passed, and the next, without my hearing of him ! A whole week elapsed in the same manner. Convinced of his affection, my fears were all for his safety ; my imagination presented danger in every form ; and, no longer able to support the terrors of my mind, filled with a thousand dreadful ideas, I sent a servant to inquire for him at the house where he lodged, who brought me word he had left Florence the very morning on which I expected his return. Those only who have loved like me can conceive what I felt at this news ; but judge into what an abyss of misery I was plunged, on receiving a few hours after a letter from his sister, pressing me to return to her at Paris, where she was still waiting, in compliance with orders from home for her brother, who was to accompany her to England

directly, to marry an heiress for whom he had been long intended by his father. She added that I must not lose a moment, for that her brother would, before I could receive the letter, be on the road to Paris.

“Rage, love, pride, resentment, indignation, now tore my bosom alternately. After a conflict of different passions, I determined on forgetting my unworthy lover, whose neglect appeared to me the contemptible insolence of superior fortune: I left the place next day, as if for Paris; but, taking the nearest way to England, came hither to a clergyman’s widow, who had been a friend of my mother’s; to whom I told my story, and with whom I determined to stay concealed, till I heard the fate of my lover. I made a solemn vow, in the first heat of my resentment, never to write to him, or let him know my retreat; and, though with infinite difficulty, I have hitherto kept it. But what have I not suffered for this conduct, which, though my reason dictates, my heart condemns! A thousand times have I been on the point of discovering myself to him, and at least giving him an opportunity of vindicating himself. I accuse myself of injustice in condemning him unheard, and on appearances which might be false. So weak is a heart in love, that, though, when I chose my place of retreat, I was ignorant of that circumstance, it was with pleasure, though a pleasure I endeavoured to hide from myself, that I heard it was only ten miles from his father’s seat. I ought certainly to have changed it on this knowledge, but find a thousand plausible reasons to the contrary, and am but too successful in deceiving myself.

“Convinced of the propriety of my conduct in avoiding him, I am not the more happy. My heart betrays me, and represents him continually to my imagination in the most amiable light, as a faithful

lover, injured by my suspicions, and made wretched by my loss.

“ Torn by sentiments which vary every moment ; the struggles of my soul have impaired my health, and will in time put an end to my life, to the continuance of which without him I am perfectly indifferent.

“ Determined, however, to persist in a conduct, which, whatever I suffer from it, is certainly my duty, I cannot, as I hear he is returned, consent to come to Belmont, where it is scarce possible I should fail meeting a man of his rank, who must undoubtedly be of Lord Belmont’s acquaintance.

“ Till he is married, or I am convinced I have injured him, I will not leave this retreat ; at least, I will not appear where I am almost certain of meeting him whom I ought for ever to avoid.

“ O Lady Anne ! how severe is this trial ! how painful the conquest over the sweetest affections of the human heart ! how mortifying to love an object which one has ceased to esteem ! Convinced of his unworthiness, my passion remains the same, nor will ever cease but with life : I at once despise and adore him : yes, my tenderness is, if possible, more lively than ever ; and, though he has doomed me to misery, I would die to contribute to his happiness.

“ You, madam, will, I know, pity and forgive the inconsistencies of a heart ashamed of its own weaknesses, yet too sincere to disguise or palliate them. I am no stranger to your nobleness of sentiment : in your friendship and compassion all my hopes of tranquillity are founded. I will endeavour to conquer this ill-placed prepossession, and render myself more worthy your esteem. If his marriage with another makes it impossible for him to suppose I throw myself designedly in his way, I will go with you to town in the winter, and try if the hurry of the

world can erase his image from my bosom. If he continues unconnected, and no accident clears up to me his conduct, I will continue where I am, and for ever hide my folly in this retreat.

“ I am, &c.

“ A HASTINGS.”

Poor Bell ; how I pity her ! Heaven certainly means love for our reward in another world, it so seldom makes us happy in this. But why do we blame Heaven ? It is our own prejudices, our rage for wealth, our cowardly compliance with the absurd opinions of others, which robs us of all the real happiness of life.

I should be glad to know who this despicable fellow is : though really it is possible she may injure him, I must know his name, and find out whether or not she is torturing herself without reason. If he bears scrutinizing, our plans may coincide, and my jointure make us all happy ; if not, he shall have the mortification of knowing she has an easy fortune, and of seeing her, what it shall be my business to make her next winter, one of the most fashionable women and celebrated toasts about town.

After all, are we not a little in the machine style, not to be able to withdraw our love when our esteem is at an end ? I suppose one might find a philosophical reason for this in Newton's Laws of Attraction. The heart of a woman does, I imagine, naturally gravitate towards a handsome, well-dressed, well-bred fellow, without inquiry into his mental qualities. Nay, as to that, do not let me be partial to you odious men : you have as little taste for mere internal charms as the lightest coquette in town. You talk sometimes of the beauties of the mind ; but I should be glad, as somebody has said very well, to see one of you in love with a mind of threescore.

I am really sorry for Bell ; but hope to bring her out of these heroics by Christmas. The town air, and being followed five or six weeks as a beauty, will do wonders. I know no specific for a love-fit, like a constant round of pretty fellows.

The world, I dare say, will soon restore her to her senses : it is impossible she should ever regain them in a lonely village, with no company but an old woman.

How dearly we love to nurse up our follies ! Bell, I dare say, fancies vast merit in this romantic constancy to a man, who, if he knew her absurdity, would laugh at it.

I have no patience with my own sex, for their want of spirit.

Friday night.

O Heavens ! who could have thought it ? Of all the birds in the air, find me out Lord Melvin for Bell Hastings' lover : nothing was ever so charming : I tell the story, which does his business here in a moment, serves my lovely Harry, and punishes the wretch's infidelity as it deserves.

Adieu ! I fly to communicate.

Saturday morning.

All this is very strange to me. Lord Belmont, to whom I last night mentioned Lord Melvin's connection with Bell as a reason against his marrying Lady Julia, assures me no such thing was ever intended ; that he was amazed how I came to think so ; that Lord Rochdale has other views for his son, to which, however, he is averse. I am glad to hear this last circumstance, and hope Bell has wronged him by her suspicions.

But who can this be that is intended for Lady Julia ? I do not love to be impertinent : but my

curiosity is rather excited. I shall not sleep till I am in this secret ; I must follow my lord about, till I get a clue to direct me. How shall I begin the attack ? “ Really, my lord,” says I, “ this surprises me extremely : I could have sworn Lord Melvin was the person your lordship meant ; if it is not him, who can it be ? ”

Yes, this will do ; I will go to him directly—Cruel man ! how he plays with my anxiety ! he is gone out in a post-chaise with Lady Julia : the chaise drove from the door this moment.

I can say not a word more ; I am on the rack of expectation ; I could not be more anxious about a lover of my own.

“ The heir of an earldom and of an affluent fortune ! ” I have tortured my brain this hour, and not a scruple the nearer.

Adieu !



TO GEORGE MORDAUNT, ESQ.

Saturday morning.

OH ! Mordaunt ! I have seen her ; have heard the sound of that enchanting voice ; my lord was in the chaise with her, they stopped to drink fresh cream ; William presented her a nosegay ; she thanked him with an air of sweetness which would have won the soul of a savage. My heart beat with unutterable transport ; it was with difficulty I restrained myself.

Mordaunt ! I must return ; I can no longer bear this absence : I will write this moment to Lord Belmont, and own my passion for his daughter : I will paint in the most lively colours my love and my despair ; I will tell him, I have nothing to hope from the world, and throw myself entirely on his friend-

ship. I know the indiscretion of this proceeding; I know I ought not to hope for success; but I have too long concealed my sentiments, and pursued a conduct unworthy of my heart.

I have written; I have sent away the letter. I have said all that can engage his heart in my favour; to-morrow he will receive my letter—to-morrow—O Mordaunt! how soon will my fate be determined! A chillness seizes me at the thought! my hand trembles, it is with difficulty I hold the pen. I have entreated an immediate answer; it will come inclosed to Mr. Herbert, to whom I have written to bring the letter himself. On Wednesday I shall be the most happy or most lost of mankind. What a dreadful interval will it be! My heart dies within me at the thought.

TO HENRY MANDEVILLE, ESQ.

Belmont, September 18.

I AM commissioned by Lady Anne, my dear Mr. Mandeville, to insist on your immediate return; she declares she can no longer support the country without you, but shall die with chagrin and *ennui*; even play itself has lost half its charms in your absence. Lady Mary, my wife, and daughter, join in the same request; which I have a thousand reasons to press your complying with as soon as is consistent with what politeness exacts in regard to Lord T——.

One, and not the weakest, is the pleasure I find in conversation, a pleasure I never taste more strongly than with you, and a pleasure which promiscuous visitors have for some time ceased to give me. I have not lost my relish for society; but it grows, in spite of all my endeavours, more delicate. I have

as great pleasure as ever in the conversation of select friends ; but I cannot so well bear the common-run of company. I look on this delicacy as one of the infirmities of age, and as much a symptom of decay, as it would be to lose my taste for roast beef and be able only to relish ortolans.

Lord Foudville is next week to marry Miss Westbrook ; they have a coach making, which is to cost a thousand pounds.

I am interrupted by a worthy man, to whom I am so happy as to be able to do a service : to you I need make no other apology.

Adieu ! my amiable friend !



TO LADY ANNE WILMOT.

Saturday, Grosvenor-street.

CAN the most refined of her sex, at the very moment when she owns herself shocked at Mrs. H——'s malicious insinuation, refuse to silence her by making me happy ? Can she submit to one of the keenest evils a sensible and delicate mind can feel, only to inflict torment on the man whose whole happiness depends on her, and to whose tenderness she has owned herself not insensible ?

Seeing your averseness to marriage, I have never pressed you on a subject which seemed displeasing to you, but left it to time and my unwearied love, to dissipate those unjust and groundless prejudices which stood in the way of all my hopes : but does not this respect, this submission, demand that you should strictly examine those prejudices, and be convinced, before you make it, that they deserve such a sacrifice ?

Why will you, my dearest Lady Anne, urge your past unhappiness as a reason against entering into a state, of which you cannot be a judge? You were never married; the soft consent of hearts, the tender sympathy of yielding minds, was wanting: forced by the will of a tyrannic father to take on you an insupportable yoke; too young to assert the rights of humanity; the freedom of your will destroyed; the name of marriage is profaned by giving it to so detestable an union.

You have often spoke with pleasure of those sweet hours we passed at Sudley-farm. Can you then refuse to perpetuate such happiness? Are there no charms in the unreserved converse of the man who adores you; or can you prefer the unmeaning flattery of fools you despise, to the animated language of faithful love?

If you are still insensible to my happiness, will not my interest prevail on you to relent? My uncle, who has just lost his only son, offers to settle his whole estate on me, on condition I immediately marry; a condition it depends on you alone whether I shall comply with. If you refuse, he gives it on the same terms to a distant relation, whose mistress has a less cruel heart. Have you so little generosity as to condemn me at once to be poor and miserable; to lose the gifts both of love and fortune?

I have written to Lady Belmont to intercede for me, and trust infinitely more to her eloquence than my own.

The only rational objection to my happiness, my uncle's estate removes: you will bring me his fortune, and your own will make Bell Hastings happy: if you now refuse, you have the heart of a tigress, and delight in the misery of others.

Interrupted—my uncle—May all good angels guard

the most amiable and lovely of women and give her
to her passionate

BELVILLE.

TO COLONEL BELVILLE.

Monday.

"WILL you marry me, my dear Ally Croaker?" For ever this question, Belville? And yet really you seem to be not at all in the secret. "Respect, submission"—I thought you had known the sex better: how should a modest woman ever be prevailed on by a respectful submissive lover? You would not surely have us—

O Heavens! a billet! some despairing inamorato Indeed! Lord Melvin? He is not going to make love to me sure?

Very well: things are in a fine train. He writes me here as pretty an heroic epistle as one would desire; setting forth his passion for Bell Hastings, whom he has just discovered is my niece, and whom he declares he cannot live without; owning appearances are against him, and begging me to convey to her a long tidi-didum letter, explaining the reasons and causes. The story is tedious, but the sum total is this: "That he found at Florence the friend on earth he most loved engaged in an affair of honour, in which he could not avoid taking part as his second; that they went to the last town in the Tuscan state, in order to escape into another, if any accident made it necessary to elude the pursuit of justice; that, to avoid suspicion, he left orders with his people to say he had left Florence; that he wrote to her by his valet, who was unfortunately seized and confined, the affair being suspected; that

he was wounded, and obliged to stay some time before he could return to Florence, when he was informed she had left Italy; and, though he had omitted no means to find her, had never been so happy as to succeed: had made his sister, Lady Louisa, his confidante, and by her assistance had almost prevailed on his father to consent."

"Almost prevailed on!" Really these are pretty airs! I shall write him an extreme stately answer, and let him know, if he expects Miss Hastings to do him the honour, his address must be in quite another style: Miss Hastings! in blood, in merit, in education, in every thing truly valuable, and in fortune too, if I please, his equal! I wish the foolish girl was not so madly in love with him, for I long to torture his proud heart: I cannot resist teasing him a little; but, as I know her weakness, and, that we must come to at last, I shall be forced to leave a door of mercy open. I shall, however, insist on his family's seeking the match, and on Lord Rochdale's asking her of me in form. I will not yield a scruple of our dignity on this occasion.

But I must carry this letter to Bell.

Adieu!

As to your foolish question, I may perhaps allow you to visit at Belmont: I will promise no more at present.

Did I tell you we all spent yesterday with my niece? She has the honour to please Lady Mary, who on seeing her at a little distance with Lady Julia and me (no ill group certainly) insisted on our sitting next winter for a picture of the Graces dancing.

"Or suppose, madam," said I, "the three goddesses on mount Ida, with Harry Mandeville for Paris?"

Poor little Emily, being equally under size for a Grace or Goddess, must be content to be a Hebe in a single piece.

Adio! Yours,

A. WILMOT.

TO HENRY MANDEVILLE, ESQ.

London, September 19.

THIS event in Russia is most extraordinary : but these sudden and violent revolutions are the natural consequences of that instability which must ever attend despotic forms of government. Happy Britain ! where the laws are equally the guard of prince and people ; where liberty and prerogative go hand in hand, and mutually support each other : where no invasion can ever be made on any part of the constitution, without endangering the whole where popular clamour, like the thunder-storm, by agitating, clears and purifies the air, and, its business done, subsides.

If this letter finds you at Lord T——'s, I would have you return immediately to Belmont, where I shall be in a few days. Lady Mary is already there, and intends to execute the design Lord Belmont mentioned to you, which makes your presence there absolutely necessary.

The tide of fortune, my dear Harry, seems turning in your favour ; but let it not harden your heart to the misfortunes of your fellow-creatures, make you insolent to merit in the vale of humbler life, or tempt you to forget that all you possess is the gift of that beneficent Power, in whose sight virtue is the only distinction.

The knowledge I have of your heart makes these

cautions perhaps unnecessary ; but you will forgive the excessive anxiety of paternal tenderness, alarmed at the near prospect of your tasting the poison most fatal to youth, the intoxicating cup of prosperity.

May Heaven, my dearest Harry, continue you all you are at present ! Your father has not another wish.

Adieu !

J. MANDEVILLE.

TO COLONEL BELVILLE.

Tuesday morning.

I STAYED last night with Bell ; there is no telling you her transport : she agrees with me, however, as to the propriety of keeping up our dignity ; and has consented, though with infinite reluctance, not to admit Lord Melvin's visits till his father has made proposals to me. She is to see him first at Belmont, whither she removes in four or five days. Emily Howard is gone, at my request, to spend that interval with her. We have a divine scheme in our heads which you are not yet to be honoured with the knowledge of.

Oh ! do you know I have this morning discovered why Lady Mary is a tory ? She has been flattered by Bolingbroke, and sung by Atterbury : had Addison tuned his lyre to her praise, she had certainly changed parties. I am seldom at a loss to explore the source of petticoat-politics. Vanity is the moving spring in the female machine, as interest is in the male. Certainly our principle of action is by much the more noble one.

Eleven o'clock.

"Lord! what is come to my mother?" She is gone smiling into Lady Mary's room: her air is gay beyond measure: it is she must sit for a dancing grace.

Past twelve.

There is something in agitation with which I am unacquainted. Lord and Lady Belmont have been an hour in close consultation with Lady Mary: *la belle Julia* is this moment summoned to attend them. This unknown lover: I tremble for Harry: should another—

Almost one.

I have your letter: this Russian event—true—as you say, these violent convulsions—yes, you are right, your reflections are perfectly just, but my thoughts are at present a little engaged. This consultation, I fear, bodes Harry no good—should my lord's authority—I am on the rack of impatience—The door opens: Lady Julia comes this way: she has been in tears: I tremble at the sight—Belville, they are not tears of sorrow; they are like the dew-drops on the morning rose; she looks a thousand times more lovely through them; her eyes have a melting languishment, a softness inexpressible, a sensibility mixed with transport—there is an animation in her look, a blush of unexpected happiness—she moves with the lightness of a wood-nymph—Lady Belmont follows with a serene joy in that amiable countenance. They approach; they are already in my apartment.

Adio!

Belville! in what words—how shall I explain to

you—I am breathless with pleasure and surprise—my lord—Harry Mandeville—Lady Julia—They were always intended for each other.

A letter from Harry this morning, confessing his passion for Lady Julia, determined them to make an immediate discovery—Read the inclosed letters, and adore the goodness of Providence, which leads us by secret ways to that happiness our own wisdom could never arrive at.

“ TO COLONEL MANDEVILLE.

Belmont, August 10, 1751.

“ MY DEAR COLONEL,

“ By a clause in the patent, which has been hitherto kept secret in our part of the family, it is provided, that, on default of heirs male in the younger branch, the title of Earl of Belmont should go to the elder. In favour also of this disposition, the greatest part of the estate then in our possession, which is about half what I now enjoy, is by a deed, in which, however, my lawyer tells me there is a flaw which makes it of no effect, annexed to the title for ever. Julia being the only child we ever had; it is very probable the estate and title will be yours. Heaven having blessed you with a son, it would be infinitely agreeable to me, and would keep up the splendour of our name, to agree on an inter-marriage between our children. I would have you educate your son with this view, and at an expense becoming the heir of the titles and possessions of our family: but, as it is possible I may yet have a son, in that case, Lady Mary, our relation, whose heart is greatly set on this marriage, will settle her estate on yours, and I will give him my daughter, with twenty thousand pounds.

“ I insist on being at the whole expense of his

education as my heir ; as the estate will probably be his own, it is only anticipating his rents a few years, and does not lay him under the shadow of an obligation.

“ I have mentioned above, that there is a defect in the deed, which puts it in my power to rob you of your right in the estate : but, as the design of our ancestor is clear, I take no merit to myself from not being the most infamous of mankind, which I should be were I capable of making use of such a circumstance to your disadvantage.

“ But, could I reconcile so base an action to myself in a private light, no consideration could make it easy to me in a public one. I know nothing so dangerous to our happy constitution as an indigent nobility, chained down to a necessity of court dependence, or tempted, by making faction the tool of ambition, to disturb the internal peace of their country. Men who are at ease in their fortunes, are generally good subjects ; the preservation of what they have is a powerful tie of obedience : it is the needy, the dissolute, the Cæsars, the Catilines of the world, who raise the storms which shake the foundation of government.

“ You will imagine, my dear friend, I only intend this alliance to take place, if their sentiments, when of age to judge for themselves, correspond with our intentions for their happiness. That this may be the case, let us educate them, with the utmost care, in every accomplishment of the mind and person, which can make them lovely in the eyes of each other.

“ Let me, my dear colonel, hear immediately if this proposal is as agreeable to you as to

“ Your faithful and affectionate

“ BELMONT.”

“ TO THE EARL OF BELMONT.

“ MY LORD,

“ I am greatly obliged to your lordship for a proposal which does my son such honour; and for a conduct towards us both so noble, and worthy your character.

“ The disposition you mention is what I have sometimes hoped, but knew your lordship's honour and integrity too well, to think it necessary to make an inquiry; convinced, if a settlement was made in my favour, you would in due time make me acquainted with it: till some probability appeared of its taking place, it was, perhaps, better concealed than disclosed.

“ The alliance your lordship proposes, if it ever takes place, will make me the happiest of mankind. Having, however, observed marriages made by parents in the childhood of the parties, to be generally disagreeable to the latter, whether from the perverseness of human nature, or the free spirit of love, impatient of the least controul, I will entreat our design may be kept secret from all the world, and in particular from the young people themselves. All we can do is, to give them such an education as will best improve the gifts of Nature, and render them objects of that lively and delicate affection which alone can make such a connexion happy. Perhaps it may be best to separate them till the time when the heart is most susceptible of tenderness; lest an habitual intercourse should weaken that impression which we wish their perfections to make on each other. Both at present promise to be lovely; and, if we guard against other attachments, the charm of novelty, added to what Nature has done for them, and those acquired graces which it is our part to

endeavour to give them, can scarce fail of inspiring a mutual passion, which one's seeming to desire it would probably prevent.

“ If I am so happy as to have your lordship's concurrence in these sentiments, I will remove my son immediately from your neighbourhood, and educate him in town: at a proper time he shall go, with a private tutor of birth and merit, to the university, and from thence make the tour of Europe, whilst Lady Julia is advancing in every charm under the eye of the most excellent of mothers.

“ Men, who act a conspicuous part on the stage of life, and who require a certain audacity and self-possession to bring their talents into full light, cannot, in my opinion, have too public an education: but women, whose loveliest charm is the rosy blush of native modesty, whose virtues blossom fairest in the vale, should never leave their household gods, the best protectors of innocence.

“ It is also my request, that my son may be educated in a total ignorance of the settlement in our favour, both because the effect of it may possibly be destroyed by your lordship's having a son, and because he will taste the pleasures of a distinguished station, if he ever arrives at it, with double relish, if bred with more moderate expectations. He will by this means, too, escape the pernicious snares of flattery, the servile court of interested inferiors, and all the various mischiefs which poison the minds of young men bred up as heirs to great estates and titles: he will see the hatefulness of pride and arrogance in others, before he is tempted to be guilty of them himself: he will learn to esteem virtue without those trappings of wealth and greatness which he will never hope to be possessed of: he will see the world as it is, by not being of consequence enough to be flattered or deceived.

“ His education, his company, his expenses shall, however, be suited to the rank he may one day possibly fill. My acquaintance with foreign courts enables me to introduce him every where to those of the first rank and merit: his equipage and attendants shall be such as may secure him general respect,

“ Your lordship’s generous offer of bearing the expense of his education deserves my sincerest gratitude; but economy will enable me to support it without the least inconvenience to my affairs: half my income, which I will spare to him, with his mother’s fortune, which shall all be devoted to this purpose, will be sufficient to give him an education becoming the heir of your lordship’s fortune and honours.

“ May Heaven prosper a design which has so laudable an end in view, as the future happiness of our children.

“ I am, my lord,

“ Your lordship’s affectionate and obedient servant,
J. MANDEVILLE.”

TO COLONEL BELVILLE.

Wednesday morning.

THIS joy is a prodigious enemy to sleep. Lady Julia rose this morning with the sun: I dare say she never thought he looked so bright: before he sets, she will see the most charming of mankind. My lord yesterday sent an express to Lord T——’s, with orders to follow Harry wherever he was, and bring him this evening to Belmont. Lady Mary is to have the pleasure of making him acquainted with

his happiness. The discovery was only delayed till convinced of their passion for each other.

Colonel Mandeville is in town, directing the drawing of the writings; and comes down in a few days to have them executed.

I have had a second letter from Lord Melvin, as respectful as the pride of woman can desire; a postscript from Lord Rochdale having satisfied me in point of decorum, I allow his son to visit here when he pleases. My niece and Emily Howard come this evening; Lady Julia is now with them; I suppose we shall see Lord Melvin to-morrow: if he is very pressing, they may perhaps be married with Lady Julia.

Heavens! Belville! what a change in all our affairs! The matrimonial star prevails; it would be strange if I should be betrayed into the party: and yet, Lady Mary has drawn so bewitching a plan of a wedding-day, as might seduce a more determined coquette. If one could be married for that day only—or if one was sure of pleasing for ever, like Lady Belmont—"Dear madam," said I, "if your ladyship would lend one your cestus."

"You are already possessed of it, my dear Lady Anne: the delicacy and purity of a bride will always give you the charms of one."

I believe her ladyship may be in the right: it is not the state, but the foolish conduct of people who enter into it that makes it unhappy.

If you should come down with Colonel Mandeville, it is impossible to say what may happen.

Absolutely, Belville, if I do condescend, which is yet extremely doubtful, we will live in the style of lovers: I hate the dull road of common marriages; no impertinent presuming on the name of husband; no saucy freedoms: I will continue to be courted,

and shall expect as much flattery, and give myself as many scornful airs, as if I had never honoured you with my hand.

I give you warning, I shall make a most intolerable wife : but that is your business, not mine.

This very day sevensnight, which is Lady Julia's birth-day, is intended for her marriage ; the house is to be full of company invited to celebrate the day, without knowing on what further account : nobody is even to suspect them to be lovers ; they are to go privately out of Lady Mary's apartment into the chapel, where my lord chooses the ceremony should be performed. We are to have a masquerade in a grand open pavilion, on Corinthian pillars, built for this happy occasion in the garden, opposite the house, which is to be in view finely illuminated : the intermediate space is to be adorned with lamps, intermixed with festoons of flowers in the trees, round which are to be seats for the villagers, who are never forgot on these days of annual rejoicing.

Lady Mary, who is mistress of the ceremonies, and who insists on joining all our hands that day, has engaged you for the ball to Lady Julia ; Harry to Bell Hastings, and Lord Melvin to me : our situation is to be kept secret for a week, which is to be filled up with various scenes of festivity ; after which, we are to go to town to be presented ; and from thence on a tour of six months to Italy. This is her scheme ; but it depends on Bell Hastings and me whether it shall be executed in full ; ten thousand to one but our cruelty spoils the prettiest mysterious plan of a wedding that can be. Absolutely Lady Mary has a kind of an idea of things—I cannot conceive how she came by it—not the least symptom of an old maid in this plan—something so fanciful, and like a love affair !——It is a thousand pities her

ladyship should not be of the party herself. Do you know never a sprightly old courtier of the queen's time?

My lord is so pleased with the thought of seeing us all happy, that he has given orders for building a temple to Love and Friendship, at a little villa which the colonel has given him, and which is almost central in respect to all our houses. Here we are to meet once a week, and exclude the rest of the world.

Harry and Lady Julia are to live at Lady Mary's seat, about ten miles from hence; and I have fixed on a house which is to be sold, at about the same distance.

And now, Belville, to be very serious, I should be the happiest creature in the world in this prospect, if I was not afraid of my own conduct. I am volatile, light, extravagant, and capricious: qualities ill suited to a matrimonial life. I know my faults, but am not able to mend them: I see the beauty of order in the moral world, yet doat to excess on irregularity.

Call on Colonel Mandeville, and concert your journey together. Heaven and earth! what have I not said in that permission? With all my affection for you, there is a solemnity in the idea—O Belville! should I ever become less dear to you! should coldness, should indifference, ever take place of that lively endearing tenderness—I will throw away the pen for a moment—

The most amiable of men will forgive the too anxious fears of excessive love: I with transport make him the arbiter of my future days. Lady Julia is come back, and has brought me the inclosed bond, by which Bell Hastings engages to pay you thirty thousand pounds on the day of my marriage. Her letter to you will explain this further.

Twelve o'clock.

Ah! cor mio! son confuso! Yes, I blush at saying in express words what I have already said by deduction. Your uncle insists on a positive "I will." How can the dear old man be so cruel? Tell him, if he is not satisfied with this letter, he shall dictate the form of consent himself.

One condition, however, I shall not dispense with; that he comes down to Belmont, and opens the ball with Lady Mary.

Adio.

TO COLONEL BELVILLE.

Wednesday, three o'clock.

I REALLY cannot help feeling prodigiously foolish about this marriage: it is a thousand to one but I retreat yet: prepare yourself for a disappointment, for I am exceedingly on the *capricioso*.

O Heavens! I forget to tell you, an old match-making lady in the neighbourhood having taken it into her head I have a passion for Harry Mandeville, and designing to win my heart by persuading me to what she supposes I have a mind to, recommended him strongly to me last night for a husband. I heard her with the utmost attention; and, when she had finished her harangue, blushed, looked down, hesitated, and denied the thing with so pretty a confusion, that she is gone away perfectly convinced I am to be Lady Anne Mandeville, and will tell it as a secret all round the country. I am not sorry for this; as it will take away all suspicion of what is really intended, and secure that secrecy we wish on

the occasion. The good old lady went away infinitely delighted at being possessed of a quality secret, which in the country gives no little importance ; pleased too with her own penetration in discovering what nobody else has suspected, I cannot conceive a happier being than she is at present.

I have just received from town the most divine stomacher and sleeve-knots you ever beheld. " An interesting event." Yes, creature, and what I can plead authority for mentioning. Did not Made-moiselle Princess of the blood of France, granddaughter of Henry the Great, write some half a dozen volumes, to inform posterity, that on Saturday the 14th of November 1668, she wore her blue ribands ? Surely you men think nothing of consequence but sieges and battles. Now, in my sentiments, it would be happy for mankind, if all the heroes who make such havock amongst their species, merely because they have nothing to do, would amuse themselves with sorting suits of ribands for their ladies.

I am in the sweetest good humour to-day that can be imagined, so mild and gentle you would be amazed ; a little impatient indeed for the evening, which is to bring my charming Harry.

I have been asking my lord, how, with Harry's sensibility, they contrived to keep him so long free from attachments. In answer to which, he gave me the enclosed sketch of a letter from Colonel Mandeville to a lady of his acquaintance at Rome, which, he said, would give me a general notion of the matter.

" TO THE COUNTESS MRLESPINI.

Paris, June 24, 1759.

" MADAM,

" You will receive this from the hands of that son

I have before had the honour of recommending to your esteem.

“ I have accompanied him myself hither ; where, being perfectly satisfied with his behaviour, and convinced that generous minds are best won to virtue by implicit confidence; I have dismissed the tutor I intended to have sent with him to Italy, shall return to England myself, and depend for his conduct on his own discretion, his desire of obliging me, and that nobleness of sentiment which will make him feel the value of my friendship for him in its utmost extent.

“ I have given him letters to the most worthy person in every court I intend he should visit ; but, as my chief dependence for the advantages of this tour are on the count and yourself, I have advised him to spend most of his time at Rome, where, honoured by your friendship, I doubt not of his receiving that last finishing, that delicate polish, which, I flatter myself, if not deceived by the fondness of a parent, is all he wants to make him perfectly amiable.

“ To you, madam, and the count, I commit him : defend him from the snares of vice, and the contagion of affectation.

“ You receive him an inexperienced youth, with lively passions, a warm and affectionate heart, an enthusiastic imagination, probity, openness, generosity, and all those advantages of person and mind which a liberal education can bestow. I expect him from your hands a gentleman, a man of honour and politeness, with the utmost dignity of sentiment and character, adorned by that easy elegance, that refined simplicity of manner, those unaffected graces of deportment, so difficult to describe, but which it is scarce possible to converse much with you without acquiring.

"Sensible of the irresistible power of beauty, I think it of the utmost consequence with what part of the female world he converses. I have from childhood habituated him to the conversation of the most lovely and polite amongst the best part of the sex, to give him an abhorrence to the indelicacy of the worst. I have endeavoured to impress on his mind the most lively ideas of the native beauty of virtue; and to cultivate in him that elegance of moral taste, that quick sensibility, which is a nearer way to rectitude than the dull road of inanimate precept.

"Continuing the same anxious cares, I send him to perfect his education, not in schools or academies but in the conversation of the most charming amongst women: the ardent desire of pleasing you and becoming worthy your esteem, inseparable from the happiness of knowing you, will be the keenest spur to his attainments; and I shall see him return all the fond heart of a parent can wish, from his ambition of being honoured with your friendship.

"To you, madam, I shall make no secret of my wish, that he may come back to England unconnected. I have a view for him beyond his most sanguine hopes, to which, however, I entreat he may be a stranger. The charms of the lady cannot fail of attaching a heart which has no prepossession; from which I conjure you, if possible, to guard him. I should even hear with pleasure you permitted him, to a certain degree, to love you, that he might be steeled to all other charms. If he is half as much in love with you as his father, all other beauties will lay snares for him in vain. I am, madam, with the most lively esteem,

"Your obedient and devoted,

"J. MANDEVILLE."

O Heavens ! whilst I have been writing, and thinking nothing of it, the pavilion, which it seems has been some time prepared, is raised opposite the window of the saloon, at the end of a walk leading to the house. We are to sup in it this evening : it is *charmante* ; the sight of it, and the idea of its destination, makes my heart palpitate a little. *Mon Dieu !* that ever I should be seduced into matrimony !

Farewell for an hour or two.

You have no notion what divine dresses we have making for the masquerade. I shall not tell you particulars, as I would not take off the pleasure of surprise ; but they are charming beyond conception.

Do you not doat on a masquerade, Belville ? For my own part, I think it is the quintessence of all sublunary joys : and, without flattering my lord's taste, I have a strange fancy this will be the most agreeable one I ever was at in my life : the scenes, the drapery, the whole disposition of it is enchanting !

Heavens ! How little a while will it be that I can write myself

A. WILMOT.

TO GEORGE MORDAUNT, ESQ.

Wednesday morning.

AFTER four days passed in anxiety not to be told, this ardently-expected morning is come ; I every moment expect Mr. Herbert ; I tremble at every sound : another hour, and the happiness of my whole life will be for ever determined : Mordaunt, the idea chills my soul.

It is now a week since I have heard from Belmont; not a line from Emily Howard or Lady Anne, the unhappy have few friends. Lord Melvin is the minion of fortune: he has taken my place in their esteem.

The time is past, and my friend is not here; he has therefore no letters from Lord Belmont. I rated his disinterestedness too high: misled by the mean despicable maxims of the world, he resents my passion for his daughter; he gives her to another without deigning even to send me an answer: he would surely have respected his own blood. My soul is on fire at this insult: his age, his virtues, protect him; but Lord Melvin—let him avoid my fury.

Yet am I not too rash? may not some accident have retarded my friend? I will wait patiently till evening: I cannot believe Lord Belmont—may he not have seen me, and suspecting some clandestine design—yes, my folly has undone me; what can he think of such a concealment?

Mordaunt! I cannot live in this suspense; I will send William this moment to Belmont.

Five o'clock.

William is come back, and has thrown me into despair: yes, my friend, it is now beyond a doubt.

Lady Julia is intended for Lord Melvin: the most splendid preparations are making; all is joy and festivity at Belmont: a wretch like me is below their thoughts: messengers are hourly coming and going from Lord Rochdale's. It is past, and I am doomed to despair: my letter has only hastened my destruction; has only hastened this detested marriage. Over-awed by paternal authority, she gives me up, she marries another; she has forgot her vows, those vows which she called on Heaven to

witness. I have lost all for which life was worth my care.

Mordaunt! I am no longer master of myself. Lord Melvin is this moment gone past to Belmont, dressed like a youthful, gay, and burning bridegroom; his eyes sparkle with new fire: his cheek has the glow of happy love. This very hour, perhaps, he calls her his—this very hour, her consenting blushes—the idea is insupportable—first may the avenging bolt of Heaven—but why supplicate Heaven?—my own arm—I will follow him—I will not tamely resign her—he shall first—yes, through my blood alone—what I intend I know not—my thoughts are all distraction?

TO COLONEL BELVILLE.

Seven o'clock.

WE expect the *caro Enrico* every moment: my chariot is gone for Emily Howard and my niece: Lord Melvin, too, comes this evening by my permission. Lady Julia has just asked me to walk with her in the park: she wants to hear me talk of Harry, whom she cannot mention herself, though her thoughts are full of nothing else: her colour comes and goes; her eyes have a double portion of softness; her heart beats with apprehensive pleasure. What an evening of transport will this be! Why are you not here, Belville? I shall absolutely be one of the old people to-night. Can you form an idea of happiness equal to Harry's: raised from the depth of despair, to the fruition of all his wishes? I long to see how he will receive the first mention of this happy turn of fortune: but Lady Mary has reserved all that to herself. Adieu!

Great God ! to what a scene have I been witness ! how shall I relate the shocking particulars !

Lady Julia and I were advanced about a quarter of a mile from the house, blessing Providence, and talking of the dear hope of future happy days : she was owning her passion with blushes, and all the tremor of modest sensibility, when we were interrupted by the clashing of swords behind some trees near us : we turned our heads, and saw Lord Melvin, distraction in his air, his sword bloody, supporting Harry Mandeville, pale, bleeding, motionless, and, to all appearance, in the agonies of death. Lady Julia gave a shriek, and fell senseless in my arms. My cries brought some of the servants, who happened to be near : part of them, with Lord Melvin, conveyed Harry to the house ; whilst the rest staid with me to take care of Lady Julia.

Harry was scarce out of sight when she recovered her senses ; she looked wildly towards the place where she first saw him ; then, starting from me, raising her eyes to Heaven, her hands clasped together—oh ! Belville ! never shall I lose the idea of that image of horror and despair—she neither spoke nor shed a tear—there was an eager wildness in her look, which froze my soul with terror : she advanced hastily towards the house, looking round her every moment as if expecting again to see him, till, having exhausted all her strength, she sunk down breathless on one of the seats, where I supported her till my lord's chariot, which I had sent for, came up, in which I placed myself by her, and we drove slowly towards the house : she was put to bed in a burning fever, preceded by a shivering, which gives me apprehensions for her, which I endeavour to conceal from the wretched parents, whose sorrows mock all description.

My lord is just come from Lord Melvin, who

insisted on being his prisoner till Harry was out of danger, disdaining to fly from justice : since my lord refuses his stay at Belmont, he entreats to be given into the hands of some gentleman near. My lord has accepted this offer, and named his father, Lord Rochdale, for the trust. He is gone under the best guard, his own honour, in which Lord Belmont has implicit confidence.

I have been into Lady Julia's room : she takes no notice of any thing. Emily Howard kneels weeping by her bedside. Lady Belmont melts my soul when I behold her : she sits motionless as the statue of despair : she holds the hand of her lovely daughter between hers, she presses it to her bosom, and the tears steal silently down her cheeks.

Unable to bear the sight, I am returned to my apartment.

Oh ! Belville ! how is the scene of happiness changed ! Where are now the gay transporting hopes which warmed our hearts this morning ?

I have with difficulty prevailed on Lady Mary, who droops under this weight of affliction, and whose years are ill suited to scenes of horror, to set out this evening for her own seat : my niece, whose sorrow you may easily imagine, is to accompany her thither. If Mr. Mandeville dies, murdered by the hand of him with whose fate hers is connected, never must she again enter those hospitable doors.

Belville ! how is the gay structure of ideal happiness fallen in one moment to the ground !

The messenger who was sent to Lord T——'s is returned, and has brought my lord's letter ; he went from thence to Mr. Herbert's, where Mr. Mandeville was supposed to be, but found nobody there but a servant, from whom he could get no information. The family had been gone five days to London, being sent for, express, to a relation who was dying.

Oh! Belville! how many accidents have conspired—I myself have innocently contributed to this dreadful event, misled by my lord's equivocal expressions, which seemed to point so plainly at Lord Melvin: if he dies—but I will not give way to so shocking an idea. The servant who went for a surgeon is not yet returned: till his wounds are examined, we must be in all the torture of suspense and apprehension.

Eleven o'clock.

The surgeon is come: he is now with Mr. Mandeville: how I dread to hear his sentence! the door opens—he comes out with Lord Belmont: horror is in the face of the latter—oh! Belville! my presaging heart—they advance towards me—I am unable to meet them—my limbs tremble—a cold dew—

Belville! his wounds are mortal—the pen drops from my hand—

A farmer's son in the neighbourhood has just brought the inclosed letter for Mr. Mandeville, which, not knowing the consequence, my lord has opened.

“ TO HENRY MANDEVILLE, ESQ.

“ London, Tuesday morning.

“ SIR,

“ The generous concern you have been pleased to take in my misfortunes, leaves me no room to doubt I shall give you pleasure by informing you that they are at an end: a rich relation, who is just expired, having made a will in my favour, which places me in circumstances beyond my hopes. But you will be still more happy to know you have contributed to this turn of my fortune. The express was arrived, with a request from our dying friend

that we would instantly come post to town; and we were lamenting our hard fate in being unable, from our indigence, to undertake a journey on which so much depended, when the post brought me a bill for one hundred pounds, which could come from no hand but yours : I wish the world was such as to make it easy for us to mistake. We set out with hearts filled with the sincerest gratitude to Heaven, and the most worthy of men ; and, on our arrival, found deferring our journey, even a few hours, would have been fatal to all our hopes.

“ To you, therefore, to whom we owe the means of taking this journey, we owe the ease of fortune which has been the consequence of it. Heaven has been pleased to make the man on earth we most esteem the instrument of its goodness to us.

“ The hurry of spirits in which we set out, prevented my leaving a direction for you with my servant, which I hope has been of no ill consequence. I have to-day sent him a direction, and ordered him to wait on you with this letter. As soon as my affairs here are settled, I will replace the money your generous friendship has assisted us with, wherever you please to order.

“ I am, with the most lively esteem,

“ Sir,

“ Your most affectionate and obedient servant,

“ W. HERBERT.”

Belville ! is it not hard the exercise of the noblest virtue should have been attended with such fatal effects ? He dies for having alleviated the distresses of his friend, for having sympathized in the affliction of others.

TO COLONEL BELVILLE.

Thursday morning.

THE most lovely of men is no more: he expired early this morning, after having in my presence owned to my lord, that jealousy was the true cause of his attacking Lord Melvin, who only fought in his own defence; which he entreated him publicly to attest, and to beg Lord Melvin's pardon, in his name, for insults which madness alone could excuse, and which it was not in man to bear: he owned Lord Melvin's behaviour in the duel had been noble; and that he had avoided giving him the least wound, till, urged by fury and despair, and aiming at the life of his generous enemy rather than at his own defence, he had rushed on the point of his sword.

He expressed great indifference for life on his own account, but dreaded the effect his death might have on the most tender of fathers: entreated my lord to soften so painful a stroke, by preparing him for it by degrees, and, if possible, to conceal from him the shocking manner of it. "How ill," said he, "has my rashness repaid him for all his anxious cares, his indulgent goodness! I suffer justly; but for him—Great God! support him in the dreadful trial, and pour all thy blessings on his head!"

He then proceeded to expostulate gently with Lord Belmont, on his supposed design of forcing the heart of his daughter, and on that neglect of himself which had planted the furies of jealousy in his breast, and occasioned this shocking event. These reproaches brought on an explanation of the situation to which his danger had reduced Lady Julia, of my lord's intention of giving her to him, and of the whole plan of purposed happiness, which his impatience,

irritated by a series of unforeseen accidents, had so fatally destroyed.

Till now, he had appeared perfectly composed; but, from the moment my lord began to speak, a wildness had appeared in his countenance, which rose before he ended, to little less than distraction: he raved, he reproached Heaven itself; then, melting into tears, prayed with fervour unspeakable for Lady Julia's recovery: the agitation of his mind caused his wounds to bleed afresh: successive faintings were the consequence, in one of which he expired.

Lord Belmont is now writing to Colonel Mandeville. How many has this dreadful event involved in misery!

Who shall tell this to Lady Julia? yet how conceal it from her? I dread the most fatal effects from her despair, when returning reason makes her capable of knowing her own wretchedness. At present, she is in a state of perfect insensibility; her fever is not the least abated; she has every symptom which can indicate danger. Lady Belmont and Emily Howard have never left her bedside a moment. I have with difficulty persuaded them to attempt to rest a few hours, and am going to take Lady Belmont's place by her bedside.

Ten o'clock.

The physician is gone: he thinks Lady Julia in danger, but has not told this to the family: I am going again to her apartment; she has not yet taken notice of any body.

I had been about half an hour in Lady Julia's room, when, having sent the last attendant away for something I wanted, she looked round, and saw we were alone: she half raised herself in the bed, and,

grasping my hand, fixed her inquiring eyes ardently on mine. I too well understood their meaning, and, unable to hide my grief, was rising to leave the bedside, when catching hold of me, with a look and air which froze my soul, "Lady Anne," said she, "does he live?" My silence, and the tears which I could not conceal, explained to her the fatal truth; when raising her streaming eyes and supplicating hands to Heaven—oh! Belville! no words can describe the excess of her sorrow and despair:—fearful of the most fatal instant effects, I was obliged to call her attendants, of whose entrance she took not the least notice. After remaining some time absorbed in an agony of grief, which took from her all power of utterance, and made her insensible to all around her, the tears, which she shed in great abundance, seemed to give her relief: my heart was melted; I wept with her. She saw my tears; and, pressing my hand tenderly between hers, seemed to thank me for the part I took in her afflictions: I had not opposed the torrent of her despair; but, when I saw it subsiding, endeavoured to sooth her with all the tender attention and endearing sympathy of faithful friendship; which so far succeeded, that I have left her more composed than I could have imagined it possible she should so soon have been: she has even an appearance of tranquillity which amazes me; and, seeming inclined to take rest, I have left her for that purpose.

May Heaven restore her to her wretched parents, whose life is wrapt in hers! may it inspire her with courage to bear this stroke, the severest a feeling mind can suffer. Her youth, her sweetness of temper, her unaffected piety, her filial tenderness, sometimes flatter me with a hope of her recovery: but when I think on that melting sensibility, on that exquisitely tender heart, which bleeds for the sorrow

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of every human being, I give way to all the horrors of despair.

Lady Julia has sent to speak with me: I will not a moment delay attending her. How blest should I be, if the sympathizing bosom of friendship could soften by partaking her sorrows!

Oh! Belville! what a request has she made! my blood runs back at the idea.

She received me with a composed air, begged me to sit down by her bedside, and, sending away her attendants, spoke as follows: "You are, I doubt not, my dear Lady Anne, surprised at the seeming tranquil manner in which I bear the greatest of all misfortunes—yes, my heart doated on him; my love for him was unutterable—but it is past: I can no longer be deceived by the fond delusion of hope: I submit to the will of Heaven. My God! I am resigned: I do not complain of what thy hand has inflicted; a few unavailing tears alone—Lady Anne, you have seen my calmness, you have seen me patient as the trembling victim beneath the sacrificer's knife. Yet think not I have resigned all sensibility: no; were it possible I could live—but I feel my approaching end: Heaven in this is merciful. That I bear this dreadful stroke with patience, is owing to the certainty I shall not long survive him; that our separation is but for a moment. Lady Anne, I have seen him in my dreams; his spotless soul yet waits for mine: yes, the same grave shall receive us; we shall be joined to part no more. All the sorrow I feel is for my dear parents: to you and Emily Howard I leave the sad task of comforting them: by all our friendship, I adjure you, leave them not to the effects of their despair. When I reflect on all their goodness, and on the misery I have brought on their grey hairs, my heart is torn in pieces: I lament that such a wretch was ever created.

"I have been to blame : not in loving the most perfect of human beings ; but in concealing that love, and distrusting the indulgence of the best of parents. Why did I hide my passion ? why conceal sentiments only blameable on the venal maxims of a despicable world ? Had I been unreserved, I had been happy : but Heaven had decreed otherwise, and I submit.

"But whither am I wandering : I sent for you to make a request ; a request in which I will not be denied. Lady Anne, I would see him ; let me be raised, and carried to his apartment, before my mother returns ; let me once more behold him, behold him for whom alone life was dear to me : you hesitate ; for pity do not oppose me ; your refusal will double the pangs of death."

Overcome by the earnestness of her air and manner, I had no resolution to refuse her : her maids are now dressing her, and I have promised to attend her to his apartment.

I am summoned. Great God ! how shall I bear a scene like this ? I tremble, my limbs will scarce support me.

Twelve o'clock.

This dreadful visit is yet unpaid : three times she approached the door, and returned as often to her apartment, unable to enter the room : the third time she fainted away. Her little remaining strength being exhausted, she has consented to defer her purpose till evening : I hope by that time to persuade her to decline it wholly. Faint and almost sinking under her fatigue, I have prevailed with her to lie down on a couch : Emily Howard sits by her, kissing her hand and bathing it with her tears.

I have been inquiring at Lady Julia's door ; she is in a sweet sleep, from which we have every thing

to hope : I fly to tell this to Lady Belmont—she will live ! Heaven has heard our prayers.

I found the wretched mother pouring out her soul before God, and imploring his mercy on her child—she heard me, and with tears of tender transport—she raised her grateful hands to Heaven—

I am interrupted : Dr. Evelin is at the gate ; he is come to my apartment, and desires me to accompany him to Lady Julia.

We found her still in a gentle sleep, composed as that of an infant : we approached the bed : Dr. Evelin took her hand ; he stood some time looking on her with the most fixed attention, when, on my expressing my hopes from her sleep, “ Madam,” said he, “ it is with horror I tell you, that sleep will probably be her last : nature is worn out, and seeks a momentary repose before her last dreadful struggle.”

Not able to bear this, I left the room—Belville ! is it possible ? Can Heaven thus overwhelm with affliction the best, the noblest of its creatures ? Shall the amiable, the reverend pair, the business of whose lives has been to make others happy, be doomed in age to bear the severest of all sorrows ; to see all their hopes blasted in one dreadful moment ? To believe this is to blaspheme Providence. No, it is not possible : Heaven will yet restore her ; look down, O God of mercy—

Dr. Evelin is now with the wretched parents, breaking to them the danger of their child : I dread seeing them after this interview ; yet he will not sure plunge them at once into despair.

She is awake ; I have been with her ; her looks are greatly changed ; her lips have a dying paleness ; there is a dimness in her eyes which alarms me : she has desired to speak a moment with Dr. Evelin ; she would know how long he thinks it probable she may live.

Six o'clock.

She is gone, Belville ; she is gone : those lovely eyes are closed in everlasting night. I saw her die, I saw the last breath quiver on her lips ; she expired, almost without a pang, in the arms of her distracted mother.

She felt her approaching dissolution, of which she had been warned, at her own earnest request, by Dr. Everim : she summoned us all to her apartment ; she embraced us with the most affecting tenderness ; she called me to her, and, giving me her picture for Colonel Mandeville, begged me to tell him, she who murdered his son died for him : entreated me to stay some time at Belmont, to comfort her disconsolate parents : conjured Emily to be a child to them, and never to let them miss their Julia.

She begged forgiveness of her wretched parents, for the only instance in which she had ever forgot her duty, and for which she now so severely suffered : entreated them to submit to the hand of Heaven, and not give way to immoderate affliction ; to consider that, if they were about to lose a child, thousands were at that moment suffering under the same distress ; that death was the common portion of humanity, from which youth are not more exempt than age ; that their separation was only temporary, whilst their re-union would be eternal : then, raising her blameless hands, prayed fervently to Heaven for them, implored their last blessing, and, turning to her agonizing mother, speechless with excess of sorrow, conjured her to reflect on the past goodness of Heaven, and the many years of happiness she had already passed with the best of men ; that this was the first misfortune she had ever known : then, embracing her fondly, weeping on her neck, and,

thanking her for all her goodness, pressed her to her bosom, and expired.

Let me draw a veil over the ensuing scene, to which words cannot do justice. With difficulty have we forced Lady Belmont from the body. I have left Emily Howard with the venerable pair, whose sorrow would melt the most obdurate heart : she kneels by Lady Belmont, she attempts to speak, but tears stop her utterance : the wretched mother sees her not ; inattentive to all but her grief, her eyes fixed on the ground, stupefaction and horror in her look, she seems insensible of all that passes around her. Sinking under his own distress, and unable to support the sight of hers, my lord is retired to his apartment. May Heaven look with pity on them both, and enable them to bear this blow to all their hopes !

Belville ! where are now all our gay schemes ? where the circle of happy friends ?

How vain are the designs of man ! Unmindful of his transitory state, he lays plans of permanent felicity ; he sees the purpose of his heart ready to prosper ; the air-drawn building rises ; he watches it with a beating heart ; he touches the very point at which he aimed, the very summit of imagined perfection, when an unforeseen storm arises, and the smiling deceitful structure of hope is dashed in one moment to the ground.

Friday morning.

Not an eye has been closed this night ; the whole house is a scene of horror : the servants glide up and down the apartments, wildness in their look, as if the last day was come.

Scarce have we been able to keep life in Lady Belmont ; she asks eagerly for her child, her Julia :

she conjures us to lead her to her ; she will not believe her dead ; she starts up, and fancies she hears her voice : then, recollecting the late dreadful scene, lifts her expostulating hands to Heaven, and sinks motionless into the arms of her attendants.

Six o'clock.

Worn out by her long watchings and the violence of her emotions, Lady Belmont is fallen into a slumber : it is now two days and nights since she has attempted rest. May that gracious God, who alone has the power, calm and tranquillize her mind !

Eight o'clock.

I have been standing an hour looking on the breathless body of my angel friend : lovely even in death, a serene smile sits on that once charming face : her paleness excepted, she looks as if in a tranquil sleep : Belville, she is happy, she is now a saint in heaven.

How persuasive is such a preacher ! I gaze on the once matchless form, and all vanity dies within me. Who was ever lovely like her ? yet she lies before me a clod of senseless clay. Those eyes, which once gave love to every beholder, are now robbed of their living lustre ; that beauteous bosom is cold as the marble on the silent tomb ; the roses of those cheeks are faded ; those vermilion lips, from whence truth and virtue ever proceeded—Belville, the starting tears—I cannot go on—

Look here, ye proud, and be humble ! which of you all can vie with her ? youth, health, beauty birth, riches, all that men call good were hers : all are now of no avail ; virtue alone bids defiance to the grave.

Great Heaven ! Colonel Mandeville is at the gate ; he knows not the cup of sorrow which awaits him ;

he cannot yet have received my lord's letter. He alights with a smile of transport: the exultation of hope is in his air; alas! how soon to be destroyed! He comes to attend the bridal-day of his son; he finds him a lifeless corse.

The servants bring him this way; they leave to me the dreadful task—Belville, I cannot go through it.

I have seen the most unhappy of fathers; I have followed him whither my heart shuddered to approach. Too soon informed of his wretched fate, he shot like lightning to the apartment of his son; he kissed his pale lifeless lips; he pressed his cold hand to his bosom; he bathed it with a torrent of tears; then, looking round with the dignity of affliction, waved his hand for us to retire. We have left him to weep at liberty over the son on whom his heart doated, to enjoy alone and undisturbed the dreadful banquet of despair.

He has been now two hours alone with the body; not an attendant has dared to intrude on the sacred rites of paternal sorrow. My lord is this moment gone to him, to give him a melancholy welcome to Belmont.

Great God! what a meeting! How different from that which their sanguine hopes had projected! The bridal couch is the bed of death.

Oh! Belville!—But shall presumptuous man dare to arraign the ways of Heaven?

TO COLONEL BELVILLE.

Tuesday morning.

YOUR letter, my dear Belville, gave me all the consolation it is possible to receive amidst such a scene

of wretchedness and despair; the tender sympathy of pitying friendship is the best balm for every woe.

The delicacy with which you decline mentioning a subject so improper for the time, would increase my esteem for you, if that was possible. I know the goodness, the tender sensibility of your heart, too well to doubt your approving my resolution to give six months to the memory of my angelic friend, and the sad task of endeavouring to soften the sorrows of her parents. Her dying voice adjured me not to leave them to their despair: I will not forget the sad task her friendship imposed.

The agony of Lady Belmont's grief begins to give place to a sorrow more reasonable, though, perhaps, not less exquisite. The violence of her emotion abates; she still weeps, but her air is more calm: she raises her eyes to Heaven, but it is with a look of patient resignation, which, whilst it melts my soul to behold, gives me hopes she will not sink under her afflictions. Lord Belmont struggles with his own grief, lest it should increase hers: he attempts to comfort her: he begs her, with an irresolute air, to consider the Hand from whence the stroke proceeded: unable to go on, his voice trembles; his bosom swells with unutterable anguish; he rises; he leaves the room; the tears trickle down his reverend cheeks.

These, Belville, these are the scenes I have perpetually before my eyes.

Colonel Mandeville indulges his sorrow alone: shut up continually in his apartment, a prey to silent distress, he seems to fly from all human converse: if, entreated, he joins our sad party a moment, he enters with a dejected air, his eyes are bent earnestly to the ground; he sits motionless, inattentive, absorbed in reflection on his own misery; then, start-

ing up, exclaims, "All else I could have borne," and retires to give himself up to his despair.

I am now convinced Emily Howard deserved that preference Lady Julia gave her over me in her heart, of which I once so unjustly complained: I lament, I regret; but am enough myself to reason, to reflect: Emily Howard can only weep.

Far from being consoled for the loss of her lovely friend by the prospect of inheriting Lord Belmont's fortune, to which, after Colonel Mandeville, she is entitled, she seems incapable of tasting any good in life without her. Every idea of happiness her gentle mind could form included Lady Julia's friendship; with her she wished to spend all her days; she was all to her tender Emily; without her she finds the world a desert.

She is changed beyond conception by her grief, a grief which has not a moment's intermission: the almost dying paleness of her cheeks is a witness of the excess of her affliction; yet this very paleness has a thousand charms: her distress has something in it unspeakably lovely; adorned by sorrow, she puts me in mind of what Young describes women in general—

——"So properly the object of affliction,
That Heaven is pleas'd to make distress become her,
And dresses her most amiably in tears."

Tuesday evening.

Belville, I have been walking in a little wilderness of flowering shrubs once peculiarly happy in Lady Julia's favour: there is a rose which I saw planted by her hand; it still flourishes in youthful bloom, whilst she, the fairest flower Heaven ever formed, lies cropped by the cruel hand of death.

What force has the imagination over the senses ! how different is the whole face of nature in my eyes ! the once smiling scene has a melancholy gloom, which strikes a damp through my inmost soul : I look in vain for those vivid beauties which once charmed me ; all beauty died with Lady Julia.

In this spot, where we have so often walked together, I give way to all the voluptuousness of sorrow ; I recal those happy days which are never to return ; a thousand tender ideas rush on my memory ; I recollect those dear moments of confidence and friendship engraved for ever on my heart ; I still hear the sweet accents of that voice, still behold that matchless form ; I see her every moment before me, in all the playfulness of youth and innocence ; I see her parents gazing on her as she passes, with that lively transport a parent only can know.

It was here her rising blushes first discovered to me the secret of her heart : it was here the loveliest of mankind first implored me to favour his passion for my sweet friend.

Pleased with the tender sorrow which possessed all my soul, I determined to indulge it to the utmost ; and, revolving in my imagination the happy hours of cheerful friendship to which that smiling scene had been witness, prolonged my walk till evening had, almost unperceived, spread its gloomy horrors round ; till the varied tints of the flowers were lost in the deepening shades of night.

Awaking at once from the reverie in which I had been plunged, I found myself at a distance from the house, just entering the little wood so loved by my charming friend ; the very moment increasing darkness gave an awful gloom to the trees. I stopped, I looked round, not a human form was in sight. I listened, and heard not a sound but the trembling of

some poplars in the wood, I called, but the echo of my own voice was the only answer I received; a dreary silence reigned around; a terror I never felt before seized me; my heart panted with timid apprehension; I breathed short; I started at every leaf that moved; my limbs were covered with a cold dew; I fancied I saw a thousand airy forms flit around me; I seemed to hear the shrieks of the dead and dying: there is no describing my horrors.

At the moment when my fears had almost deprived me of sense, I saw Colonel Mandeville approach. I concealed from him the terrors of my soul, lest they should add to the sorrow which consumed him. He addressed me in a faltering voice, conducted me to the house almost without speaking, and leading me into the saloon—oh, Belville! how shall I describe what I felt on entering the room!

Is not death of itself sufficiently dreadful, that we thus clothe it in additional terrors, by the horrid apparatus with which we suffer it to be attended? The room was hung with black, lighted up to show the affecting objects it contained, and in the midst, in their coffins, the breathless bodies of the hapless lovers: on a couch near them, supported by Emily Howard, the wretched mother wringing her hands in all the agony of despair; Lord Belmont standing by the bodies, looking at them alternately, weeping over his child, and raising his desponding eyes to Heaven, beseeching the God of Mercy to relieve him from this load of misery, and to put a speedy period to that life which was now robbed of all its happiness.

I approached Lady Julia's coffin: I gazed eagerly on her angel countenance, serene as that of a sleeping infant: I kissed her lifeless lips, which still wore the smile of innocence and peace. Belville, may my

last end be like hers ! may I meet her in the regions of immortality ! Never shall I forget her gentle virtues, or the delight I found in her friendship.

She was wrapped in a loose robe of white satin ; her head covered with a veil of gauze : the village maids, who laid her in the coffin, had adorned her with the freshest flowers ; they stood at an awful distance, weeping her hard fate and their own : they have entreated to watch around her this night, and to bear her to-morrow to the grave.

I had stood some time looking on the dear remains of Lady Julia, when Colonel Mandeville took my hand, and leading me to the coffin in which his son's were deposited, " Lady Anne," said he, " you have forgot your once favoured friend, your once gay, once lovely Harry Mandeville. Behold all that death has left of the darling of a fond parent's heart ! The graces of that form are lost ; those lips have ceased to utter the generous sentiments of the noblest heart which ever beat ; but never will his varied perfections be blotted from the mind of his father."

I approached the most lovely of men ; the traces of sorrow were visible on his countenance ; he died in the moment when he heard the happiness which had been vainly intended for him. My tears streamed afresh when I beheld him, when I remembered the sweet hours we had passed together, the gay scenes which hope had painted to our hearts : I wept over the friend I had so loved, I pressed his cold hand to my lips.

Belville ! I am now accustomed to horrors.

We have prevailed on the wretched parents to retire : Emily Howard and I have entreated to watch our angel friends till midnight, and then leave them to the village maids, to whom Lady Julia's weeping attendants insist on being joined.

I dread the rising of to-morrow's sun; he was meant to light us to happiness.

Thursday morning.

Belville! this morning is come; this morning once so ardently expected: who shall ever dare to say, "To-morrow I will be happy?"

At dawn of day we returned to the saloon: we had a last adieu to the loved remains; my lord and Colonel Mandeville had been before us: they were going to close the coffins, when Lady Belmont burst wildly into the room; she called eagerly for her Julia, for the idol of her agonizing soul: "Let me once more behold my child; let me once more kiss those icy lips. Oh! Julia! this day first gave thee birth; this day fond hope set down for thy bridal; this day we resign thee to the grave!"

Overcome by the excess of her sorrow, she fainted into the arms of her woman: we took that opportunity to convey her from this scene of terrors: her senses are not yet returned.

Thursday evening.

What a day have I passed! may the idea of it be ever blotted from my mind!

Nine o'clock.

The sad procession begins; the whole village attend in tears: they press to perform the last melancholy duties: her servants crowd eagerly round; they weep, they beat their bosoms, they call on their angelic mistress, they kiss the pall that covers her breathless form. Borne by the youngest of the village maids—oh! Belville! never more shall I behold her! the loveliest of her sex, the friend on whom my heart doated—one grave receives the hapless lovers—

They move on—far other processions—but who shall resist the hand of Heaven?

Emily Howard comes this way; she has left the wretched parents: there is a wildness in her air which chills my blood; she will behold her friend once more; she proposes to meet and join the procession: I embraced the offer with transport—the transport of enthusiastic sorrow.

We have beheld the closing scene—Belville, my heart is breaking—the pride of the world, the loveliest pair that ever breathed the vital air are now cold and inanimate in the grave.

TO COLONEL BELVILLE.

Sunday morning.

I AM just come from chapel with Lady Belmont, who has been pouring out the sorrows of her soul to her Creator, with a fervour of devotion which a mind like hers alone can feel. When she approached the seat once filled by Lady Julia, the tears streamed involuntarily down her cheeks; she wiped them away, she raised her eyes to Heaven, and falling on her knees, with a look of pious resignation, seemed to sacrifice her grief to her God, or at least to suspend the expression of it in his presence.

Next Sunday she goes to the parish-church, where the angelic pair are interred. I dread her seeing the vault, yet think she cannot too soon visit every place which must renew the excess of her affliction. She will then, and not till then, find by degrees the violence of her sorrow subside, and give way to that pleasing melancholy, that tender regret, which, however strange it may appear, is one of the most charming sensations of the human heart.

Whether it be that the mind abhors nothing like a state of inaction, or from whatever cause I know not, but grief itself is more agreeable to us than indifference; nay, if not too exquisite, is in the highest degree delightful; of which the pleasure we take in tragedy, or in talking of our dead friends, is a striking proof. We wish not to be cured of what we feel on these occasions; the tears we shed are charming—we even indulge in them. Belville, does not the very word *indulge* show the sensation to be pleasurable?

I have just now a letter from my niece; she is in despair at this dreadful event; she sees the amiable, the venerable parents, whose happiness was the ardent wish of her soul, and from whom she had received every proof of esteem and friendship, reduced to the extremest misery by the hand of him she loves: for ever excluded from Belmont, for ever to them an object of horror, she seems to herself guilty of their wretchedness, she seems to have struck the fatal blow.

Since Mr. Mandeville's death, she has left Lady Mary; whose tears, she fancied, were redoubled at her sight.

Nor is she less wretched on Lord Melvin's account: she is distracted with her terrors for his life; which is however safe by Mr. Mandeville's generous care, who, when expiring, gave testimony to his innocence.

You will oblige me by begging of Lady Betty to take her at present under her protection: it ill suits the delicacy of her sex and birth to remain in London alone and unconnected: with your amiable mother, she cannot fail of being happy.

I had persuaded Lady Belmont to walk in the garden. She went with me, leaning on my arm, when, the door being opened, the first object that

struck her sight was the pavilion raised for the marriage of her daughter, which none of us had thought of having removed.

She started, she returned hastily to her apartment, and, throwing herself on a couch, gave a loose to all the anguish of her soul.

Belville, every object she meets will remind her of the darling of her heart.

My lord and Colonel Mandeville are together; they are projecting a tomb for their lovely children: a tomb, worthy the ardour of their own paternal affection; worthy to perpetuate the memory of their virtues, their love, and their wretched fate. How often shall I visit this tomb! how often strew it with the sweetest flowers!

Sunday afternoon.

As I passed this moment through the saloon, I went mechanically to the window from whence we used to contemplate the happy group of villagers. Belville, how was I struck with the change! not one of the late joyous train appeared; all was a dismal scene of silent unsocial solitude; lost to the idea of pleasure, all revere, all partake, the sorrows of their godlike benefactors: with Lady Julia, all joy has left the once charming shades of Belmont.

Lord Fondville is gone past with his bride, in all the splendour of exulting transport. Scarce can I forbear accusing Heaven! The worthless live and prosper; the virtuous sink untimely to the grave!

My lord has ordered the pavilion to be removed: he will build an obelisk on the spot where it stood, on the spot once dedicated to the happiness of his child.

A stranger has been to-day at the parish church, inquiring for the grave of Mr. Mandeville; his behaviour witnessed the most lively sorrow: it can be

no other than Mr. Herbert. I have told this to my lord, who will write and ask him to Belmont, that he may mix his tears with ours : whoever loved Mr. Mandeville, will be here a most welcome guest.

Monday morning.

I have persuaded Lady Belmont to go out for an hour with me in my chariot this morning : we are to go a private road, where we are sure of not seeing a human being. Adieu !

A. WILMOT.

TO THE EARL OF BELMONT,

MY LORD,

Mount Melvin, Wednesday.

IF my regret for the late dreadful event, an event embittered by the circumstances your last letter communicated to me, could receive any increase, it certainly must from the generous behaviour of Mr. Mandeville ; whose care for my unhappy son, when expiring, is a proof his blood was drawn from the same source as your lordship's. Yes, he was indeed worthy the happiness you intended him, worthy the honoured name of Mandeville.

Relieved, by the noble conduct of your lamented kinsman, from the fears I entertained for my son's life, my sorrow for the miseries he has occasioned is only the more severe. I feel with unutterable anguish that my ancient friend, the friend of my earliest youth, is childless by the crime of him who owes his being to me ; the blow his hand unwillingly struck has reached the heart of the incomparable Lady Julia. I think of her angelic perfections, of the untimely fate which has robbed the world of its

loveliest ornament, and almost wish never to have been a father.

Lady Rochdale and Louisa are in tears by me : for ever excluded from Belmont, they look on themselves as exiles, though at home. The horrors of mind under which my son labours are unutterable ; he entreats to see Colonel Mandeville ; to obtain his pardon for that involuntary crime, which has destroyed all the happiness of his life.

Will you, my friend, once more admit us ? Allow us one interview with yourself and Colonel Mandeville ? I ask no more, nor will ever repeat the visit : I could not support the sight of Lady Belmont.

I am, my lord,

Your lordship's most faithful,
though wretched friend,

ROCHDALE.

TO THE EARL OF ROCHDALE.

MY LORD,

Belmont, Wednesday.

CONVINCED Lord Melvin is more unfortunate than culpable, it would be cruel to treat him as a criminal. I feel a horror I cannot conquer at the idea of ever receiving the visit your lordship has proposed ; but, conscious of the injustice of indulging it, I sacrifice it to our ancient friendship, and only postpone, not refuse, the visit : I will struggle with the reluctance of my heart, to see the guiltless author of my misery, as soon as he is publicly exculpated from the crime he at present stands charged with. Colonel Mandeville must appear as his accuser : wretched as his hand has made me, justice obliges me to bear witness to his innocence : Lady Anne

Wilmot, who was present at Mr. Mandeville's dying declaration, is ready to confirm my evidence : Lord Melvin therefore has nothing to fear. The trial once past, I will endeavour to prevail on Colonel Mandeville and Lady Belmont to make the same painful sacrifice to friendship, to which time and reason will, I hope, perfectly reconcile us ; but your lordship will, on a moment's reflection, be convinced that, till this is past, it would be indecent in me to see Lord Melvin.

We are greatly obliged to Lady Rochdale and Lady Louisa ; the time of whose visit their own politeness and sensibility will regulate : it is a severe addition to my wretchedness, that the family of my friend is so fatally involved in it.

Oh ! Lord Rochdale ! you are a father, and can pity us : you can judge the anguish to which we must ever be a prey : never more shall we know a cheerful hour ; our lost child will be ever at our hearts : when I remember her filial sweetness, her angel-virtues, her matchless perfections—the only view we had in life was to see her happy : that is past, and all is now a dreary wild before us. Time may blunt the keen edge of sorrow, and enable us to bear the load of life with patience ; but never must we hope the return of peace.

The shortness of life, and the consideration how much of our own is past, are the only consolations we can receive : it cannot be long before we rejoice our beloved child : we have only to pray for that ardently-expected hour, which will re-unite us to all we love.

Why will man lay schemes of lasting felicity ? By an over-solicitude to continue my family and name, and secure the happiness of my child, I have defeated my own purpose, and fatally destroyed both.

Humbled in the dust, I confess the hand of Heaven: the pride of birth, the grandeur of my house, had too great a share in my resolves!

Oh! my friend!—but I consider the hand which directed the blow, and submit to the will of my God.

I am, &c.

BELMONT.

TO COLONEL BELVILLE.

Belmont, Sunday morning.

I AM desired by my lord to ask you hither, and beg you will bring my niece with you. Lady Belmont joins in the request: her nobleness of sentiment has conquered the reluctance she had to see her; she has even promised to endeavour to bear the sight of Lord Melvin; but I fear this is more than is in her power: she fainted when the request was first made. Lady Mary is expected here this evening.

Belville, you are coming to Belmont, once the smiling paradise of friendship. Alas! how changed from that once happy abode! Where are those blameless pleasures, that convivial joy, those sweet follies, which once gave such charms to this place? For ever gone, for ever changed to a gloomy sadness, for ever buried with Lady Julia.

Lady Belmont struggles nobly with her grief; she has consented to see her friends, to see all who will hear her talk of her child: a tender melancholy has taken place of those horrors which it was impossible long to support and live.

Colonel Mandeville, is to stay at Belmont; they are to indulge in all the voluptuousness of sorrow: they are to sit all day and talk of their matchless children, and count the hours till they follow them

to the grave. They have invited all who will join in tears with them: the coach is gone to-day for Mr. and Mrs. Herbert.

Emily Howard and I bend our whole thoughts to find out means to soften their sorrows. I hope much from your conversation, and the endearing sensibility of your soul: it is not by resisting, but by soothing grief, that we must heal the wounded heart.

There is one pleasure to which they can never be insensible—the pleasure of relieving the miseries of others. To divert their attention from the sad objects which now engross them, we must find out the retreats of wretchedness; we must point out distress which it is in their power to alleviate.

Oh, Belville! But in vain does the pride of human wisdom seek to explore the counsels of the Most High! Certain of the paternal care of our Creator, our part is, submission to his will.

THE END OF LADY JULIA MANDEVILLE.

NATURE AND ART.

BY

Elizabeth
MRS. INCHBALD.



NATURE AND ART.

CHAPTER I.

AT a time when the nobility of Britain were said, by the poet laureat, to be the admirers and protectors of the arts, and were acknowledged by the whole nation to be the patrons of music—William and Henry, youths under twenty years of age, brothers, and the sons of a country shopkeeper who had lately died insolvent, set out on foot for London, in the hope of procuring by their industry a scanty subsistence.

As they walked out of their native town, each with a small bundle at his back, each observed the other drop several tears: but, upon the sudden meeting of their eyes, they both smiled with a degree of disdain at the weakness in which they had been caught.

"I am sure," said William (the elder), "I don't know what makes me cry."

"Nor I neither," said Henry; "for though we may never see this town again, yet we leave nothing behind us to give us reason to lament."

"No," replied William, "nor any body who cares what becomes of us."

"But I was thinking" said Henry, now weeping bitterly, "that, if my poor father were alive, he

would care what was to become of us: he would not have suffered us to begin this long journey without a few more shillings in our pockets."

At the end of this sentence, William, who had with some effort suppressed his tears while his brother spoke, now uttered, with a voice almost inarticulate,—“Don't say any more; don't talk any more about it. My father used to tell us, that when he was gone we must take care of ourselves: and so we must. I only wish,” continued he, giving way to his grief, “that I had never done any thing to offend him while he was living.”

“That is what I wish too,” cried Henry. “If I had always been dutiful to him while he was alive, I would not shed one tear for him now that he is gone: but I would thank Heaven that he had escaped from his creditors.”

In conversation such as this, wherein their sorrow for their deceased parent seemed less for his death, than because he had not been so happy when living, as they ought to have made him; and wherein their own outcast fortune was less the subject of their grief, than the reflection, what their father would have endured, could he have beheld them in their present situation;—in conversation such as this, they pursued their journey till they arrived at that metropolis, which has received for centuries past, from the provincial towns, the bold adventurer of every denomination; has stamped his character with experience and example; and, while it has bestowed on some coronets and mitres—on some the lasting fame of genius—to others has dealt beggary, infamy, and untimely death.

CHAPTER II.

AFTER three weeks passed in London, a year followed, during which William and Henry never sat down to a dinner, or went into a bed, without hearts glowing with thankfulness to that Providence who had bestowed on them such unexpected blessings; for they no longer presumed to expect (what still they hoped they deserved) a secure pittance in this world of plenty. Their experience, since they came to town, had informed them that to obtain a permanent livelihood is the good fortune but of a part of those who are in want of it: and the precarious earning of half-a-crown, or a shilling, in the neighbourhood where they lodged, by an errand, or some such accidental means, was the sole support which they at present enjoyed.

They had sought for constant employment of various kinds; and even for servants' places; but obstacles had always occurred to prevent their success. If they applied for the situation of a clerk to a man of extensive concerns, their qualifications were admitted; but there must be security given for their fidelity;—they had friends, who would give them a character, but who would give them nothing else.

If they applied for the place even of a menial servant, they were too clownish and awkward for the presence of the lady of the house;—and once, when William (who had been educated at the free grammar-school of the town in which he was born, and was an excellent scholar), hoping to obtain the good opinion of a young clergyman whom he solicited for the favour of waiting upon him, said submissively, “that he understood Greek and Latin,”

he was rejected by the divine, "because he could not dress hair."

Weary of repeating their mean accomplishments of "honesty, sobriety, humility," and on the precipice of reprobating such qualities,—which, however beneficial to the soul, gave no hope of preservation to the body,—they were prevented from this profanation by the fortunate remembrance of one qualification, which Henry, the possessor, in all his distress, had never till then called to his recollection; but which, as soon as remembered and made known, changed the whole prospect of wretchedness placed before the two brothers; and they never knew want more.

Reader—Henry could play upon the fiddle.

CHAPTER III.

No sooner was it publicly known that Henry could play most enchantingly upon the violin, than he was invited into many companies where no other accomplishment could have introduced him. His performance was so much admired, that he had the honour of being admitted to several tavern feasts, of which he had also the honour to partake without partaking of the expense. He was soon addressed by persons of the very first rank and fashion, and was once seen walking side by side with a peer.

But yet, in the midst of this powerful occasion for rejoicing, Henry, whose heart was particularly affectionate, had one grief which eclipsed all the happiness of his new life;—his brother William could *not* play on the fiddle! consequently, his brother

William, with whom he had shared so much ill, could not share in his good fortune.

One evening, Henry, coming home from a dinner and concert at the Crown and Anchor, found William, in a very gloomy and peevish humour, poring over the orations of Cicero. Henry asked him several times "how he did," and similar questions, marks of his kind disposition towards his beloved brother: but all his endeavours, he perceived, could not sooth or soften the sullen mind of William. At length, taking from his pocket a handful of almonds, and some delicious fruit (which he had purloined from the plenteous table, where his brother's wants had never been absent from his thoughts), and laying them down before him, he exclaimed, with a benevolent smile, "Do, William, let me teach you to play upon the violin."

William, full of the great orator whom he was then studying, and still more alive to the impossibility that *his* ear, attuned only to sense, could ever descend from that elevation, to learn mere sounds—William caught up the tempting presents which Henry had ventured his reputation to obtain for him, and threw them all indignantly at the donor's head.

Henry felt too powerfully his own superiority of fortune, to resent this ingratitude: he patiently picked up the repast, and laying it again upon the table, placed by its side a bottle of claret, which he held fast by the neck, while he assured his brother, that, "although he had taken it while the waiter's back was turned, yet it might be drank with a safe conscience by them; for he had not himself tasted one drop at the feast, on purpose that he might enjoy a glass with his brother at home, and without wronging the company who had invited him."

The affection Henry expressed as he said this,

or the force of a bumper of wine, which William had not seen since he left his father's house, had such an effect in calming the displeasure he was cherishing, that, on his brother's offering him the glass, he took it; and he deigned even to eat of his present.

Henry, to convince him that he had stinted himself to obtain for him this collation, sat down and partook of it.

After a few glasses, he again ventured to say, "Do, brother William, let me teach you to play on the violin."

Again his offer was refused, though with less vehemence: at length they both agreed that the attempt could not prosper.

"Then," said Henry, "William, go down to Oxford, or to Cambridge. There, no doubt, they are as fond of learning as in this gay town they are of music. You know you have as much talent for the one as I for the other: do go to one of our universities, and see what dinners, what suppers, and what friends *you* will find there."

CHAPTER IV.

WILLIAM *did* go to one of those seats of learning, and would have starved there, but for the affectionate remittances of Henry, who shortly became so great a proficient in the art of music, as to have it in his power not only to live in a very reputable manner himself, but to send such supplies to his brother, as enabled him to pursue his studies.

With some, the progress of fortune is rapid. Such is the case when, either on merit or demerit, great patronage is bestowed. Henry's violin had often charmed, to a welcome forgetfulness of his insigni-

ficance, an effeminate lord ; or warmed with ideas of honour the head of a duke, whose heart could never be taught to feel its manly glow. Princes had flown to the arms of their favourite fair ones with more rapturous delight, softened by the masterly touches of his art : and these elevated personages, ever grateful to those from whom they receive benefits, were competitors in the desire of heaping favours upon him. But he, in all his advantages, never once lost for a moment the hope of some advantage for his brother William : and when at any time he was pressed by a patron to demand a " token of his regard," he would constantly reply—

" I have a brother, a very learned man, if your lordship (your grace, or your royal highness) would confer some small favour on him——"

His lordship would reply, " He was so teased and harassed in his youth by learned men, that he had ever since detested the whole fraternity."

His grace would inquire " if the learned man could play upon any instrument."

And his highness would ask " if he could sing."

Rebuffs such as these poor Henry met with in all his applications for William, till one fortunate evening, at the conclusion of a concert, a great man shook him by the hand, and promised a living of five hundred a-year (the incumbent of which was upon his death-bed) to his brother, in return for the entertainment that Henry had just afforded him.

Henry wrote in haste to William, and began his letter thus : " My dear brother, I am not sorry you did not learn to play upon the fiddle."

CHAPTER V.

THE incumbent of this living died—William underwent the customary examinations, obtained successively the orders of deacon and priest ; then as early as possible came to town, to take possession of the gift which his brother's skill had acquired for him.

William had a steady countenance, a stern brow, and a majestic walk; all of which this new accession, this holy calling to religious vows, rather increased than diminished. In the early part of his life, the violin of his brother had rather irritated than soothed the morose disposition of his nature: and though, since their departure from their native habitation, it had frequently calmed the violent ragings of his hunger, it had never been successful in appeasing the disturbed passions of a proud and disdainful mind.

As the painter views with delight and wonder the finished picture, expressive testimony of his taste and genius; as the physician beholds with pride and gladness the recovering invalid, whom his art has snatched from the jaws of death; as the father gazes with rapture on his first child, the creature to whom he has given life; so did Henry survey, with transporting glory, his brother, drest for the first time in canonicals, to preach at his parish church. He viewed him from head to foot—smiled—viewed again—pulled one side of his gown a little this way, one end of his band a little that way—then stole behind him, pretending to place the curls of his hair, but in reality, to indulge, and to conceal, tears of fraternal pride and joy.

William was not without joy: neither was he wanting in love or gratitude to his brother—but his pride was not completely satisfied.

"I am the elder," thought he to himself, "and a man of literature; and yet am I obliged to my younger brother, an illiterate man."—Here he suppressed every thought which could be a reproach to that brother. But there remained an object of his former contempt, now become even detestable to him—ungrateful man: the very agent of his elevation was now so odious to him, that he could not cast his eyes upon the friendly violin without instant emotions of disgust.

In vain would Henry at times endeavour to subdue his haughtiness, by a tune on this wonderful machine. "You know I have no ear," William would sternly say, in recompense for one of Henry's best solos. Yet was William enraged at Henry's answer, when, after taking him to hear him preach, he asked him, "how he liked his sermon," and Henry modestly replied (in the technical phrase of his profession), "You know, brother, I have no ear."

Henry's renown in his profession daily increased; and, with his fame, his friends. Possessing the virtues of humility and charity, far above William, who was the professed teacher of those virtues, his reverend brother's disrespect for his vocation never once made him relax, for a moment, in his anxiety to gain him advancement in the church. In the course of a few years, and in consequence of many fortuitous circumstances, he had the gratification of procuring for him the appointment to a deanery; and thus at once placed between them an insurmountable barrier to all friendship, that was not the effect of condescension on the part of the dean.

William would now begin seriously to remonstrate with his brother "upon his useless occupation," and would intimate "the degradation it was to him, to hear his frivolous talent spoken of in all companies."

Henry believed his brother to be much wiser than himself, and suffered shame that he was not more worthy of such a relation. To console himself for the familiar friend, whom he now perceived he had entirely lost, he searched for one of a softer nature—he married.

CHAPTER VI.

As Henry despaired of receiving his brother's approbation of his choice, he never mentioned the event to him. But William, being told of it by a third person, inquired of Henry, who confirmed the truth of the intelligence; and acknowledged, that, in taking a wife, his sole view had been, to obtain a kind companion and friend, who would bear with his failings, and know how to esteem his few qualifications: therefore, he had chosen one of his own rank in life, and who, having a taste for music, and, as well as himself, an obligation to the art——

“And is it possible,” cried the dean, “that what has been hinted to me is true? Is it possible that you have married a public singer?”

“She is as good as myself,” returned Henry: “I did not wish her to be better, for fear she should despise me.”

“As to despise,” answered the dean, “Heaven forbid that we should despise any one—that would be acting unlike a Christian—but do you imagine I can ever introduce her to my intended wife, who is a woman of family?”

Henry had received in his life many insults from his brother: but, as he was not a vain man, he generally thought his brother in the right, and consequently submitted with patience—but, though he

had little self-love, he had for his wife an unbounded affection: on the present occasion, therefore, he began to raise his voice, and even (in the coarse expression of clownish anger) to lift his hand: but the sudden and affecting recollection of what he had done for the dean—of the pains, the toils, the hopes, and the fears he had experienced when soliciting his preferment—this recollection overpowered his speech, weakened his arm, and deprived him of every active force, but that of flying out of his brother's house (in which they then were) as swift as lightning, while the dean sat proudly contemplating —“ that he had done his duty.”

For several days Henry did not call, as was his custom, to see his brother: William's marriage drew near, and he sent a formal card to invite him on that day; but not having had the condescension to name his sister-in-law in the invitation, Henry thought proper not to accept it; and the joyful event was celebrated without his presence. But the ardour of the bridegroom was not so vehement as to overcome every other sensation—he missed his brother: that heart-felt cheerfulness with which Henry had ever given him joy upon every happy occasion—even amidst all the politer congratulations of his other friends—seemed to the dean mournfully wanting. This derogation from his felicity he was resolved to resent: and for a whole year these brothers, whom adversity had entwined closely together, prosperity separated.

Though Henry, on his marriage, paid so much attention to his brother's prejudices, as to take his wife from her public employment, this had not so entirely removed the scruples of William, as to permit him to think her a worthy companion for Lady Clementina, the daughter of a poor Scotch earl, whom he had chosen, merely that he might be proud

of her family ; and, in return, suffer that family to be ashamed of *his*.

If Henry's wife were not fit company for Lady Clementina, it is to be hoped that she was company for angels : she died within the first year of her marriage, a faithful, an affectionate wife, and a mother.

When William heard of her death, he felt a sudden shock ; and a kind of fleeting thought glanced across his mind, that

“ Had he known she had been so near her dissolution, she might have been introduced to Lady Clementina ; and he himself would have called her sister.”

That is (if he had defined his fleeting idea), “ They would have had no objection to have met this poor woman for the *last time* ; and would have descended to the familiarity of kindred, in order to have wished her a good journey to the other world.”

Or, is there in death something which so raises the abjectness of the poor, that, on their approach to its sheltering abode, the arrogant believer feels the equality he had before denied, and trembles ?

CHAPTER VII.

THE wife of Henry had been dead near six weeks before the dean heard the news : a month then elapsed in thoughts by himself, and consultations with Lady Clementina, how he should conduct himself on this occurrence. Her advice was,

“ That, as Henry was the younger, and by their stations, in every sense, the dean's inferior, Henry ought first to make overtures of reconciliation.”

The dean answered, “ He had no doubt of his

brother's good will to him ; but that he had reason to think, from the knowledge of his temper, he would be more likely to come to him upon an occasion to bestow comfort, than to receive it : for instance, if I had suffered the misfortune of losing your ladyship, my brother, I have no doubt, would have forgotten his resentment, and——”

She was offended that the loss of the vulgar wife of Henry should be compared to the loss of her—she lamented her indiscretion in forming an alliance with a family of no rank, and implored the dean to wait till his brother should make some concession to him, before he renewed the acquaintance.

Though Lady Clementina had mentioned on this occasion her *indiscretion*, she was of a prudent age—she was near forty—yet, possessing rather a handsome face and person, she would not have impressed the spectator with a supposition that she was near so old, had she not constantly attempted to appear much younger. Her dress was fantastically fashionable, her manners affected all the various passions of youth, and her conversation was perpetually embellished with accusations against her own “heedlessness, thoughtlessness, carelessness, and childishness.”

There is, perhaps, in each individual, one parent motive to every action, good or bad. Be that as it may, it was evident, that with Lady Clementina, all she said or did, all she thought or looked, had but one foundation—vanity. If she were nice, or if she were negligent, vanity was the cause of both ; for she would contemplate with the highest degree of self-complacency “what such-a-one would say of her elegant preciseness, or what such-a-one would think of her interesting neglect.”

If she complained she was ill, it was with the certainty that her languor would be admired : if she

boasted she was well, it was that the spectator might admire her glowing health : if she laughed, it was because she thought it made her look pretty : if she cried, it was because she thought it made her look prettier still. If she scolded her servants, it was from vanity, to show her knowledge superior to theirs : and she was kind to them from the same motive, that her benevolence might excite their admiration. Forward, and impertinent in the company of her equals, from the vanity of supposing herself above them, she was bashful even to shamefacedness in the presence of her superiors, because her vanity told her she engrossed all their observation. Through vanity she had no memory ; for she constantly forgot every thing she heard others say, from the minute attention which she paid to every thing she said herself.

She had become an old maid from vanity, believing no offer she received worthy of her deserts ; and when her power of farther conquest began to be doubted, she married from vanity, to repair the character of her fading charms. In a word, her vanity was of that magnitude, that she had no conjecture but that she was humble in her own opinion ; and it would have been impossible to have convinced her that she thought well of herself, because she thought *so well*, as to be assured that her own thoughts undervalued her.

CHAPTER VIII.

THAT, which in a weak woman is called vanity, in a man of sense is termed pride. Make one a degree stronger, or the other a degree weaker, and the dean and his wife were infected with the self-same folly.

Yet, let not the reader suppose that this failing (however despicable) had erased from either bosom all traces of humanity. They are human creatures who are meant to be pourtrayed in this little book : and where is the human creature who has not some good qualities to soften, if not to counterbalance, his bad ones ?

The dean, with all his pride, could not wholly forget his brother, nor eradicate from his remembrance the friend that he had been to him : he resolved, therefore, in spite of his wife's advice, to make him some overture, which he had no doubt Henry's good-nature would instantly accept. The more he became acquainted with all the vain and selfish propensities of Lady Clementina, the more he felt a returning affection for his brother : but little did he suspect how much he loved him, till (after sending to various places to inquire for him) he learned—that on his wife's decease, unable to support her loss in the surrounding scene, Henry had taken the child she brought him in his arms, shaken hands with all his former friends—passing over his brother in the number—and set sail in a vessel bound for Africa, with a party of Portuguese and some few English adventurers, to people there the uninhabited part of an extensive island.

This was a resolution, in Henry's circumstances, worthy a mind of singular sensibility : but William had not discerned, till then, that every act of Henry's was of the same description ; and more than all, his every act towards him. He staggered when he heard the tidings ; at first thought them untrue ; but quickly recollected, that Henry was capable of surprising deeds ! He recollected, with a force which gave him torture, the benevolence his brother had ever shown to him—the favours he had heaped upon him—the insults he had patiently endured in requital !

In the first emotion, which this intelligence gave the dean, he forgot the dignity of his walk and gesture: he ran with frantic enthusiasm to every corner of his deanery where the least vestige of what belonged to Henry remained—he pressed close to his breast, with tender agony, a coat of his, which by accident had been left there—he kissed and wept over a walking-stick which Henry once had given him—he even took up with delight, a music book of his brother's—nor would his poor violin have then excited anger.

When his grief became more calm, he sat in deep and melancholy meditation, calling to mind when and where he saw his brother last. The recollection gave him fresh cause of regret. He remembered they had parted on his refusing to suffer Lady Clementina to admit the acquaintance of Henry's wife. Both Henry and his wife he now contemplated beyond the reach of his pride; and he felt the meanness of his former and the imbecility of his future haughtiness towards them.

To add to his self-reproaches, his tormented memory presented to him the exact countenance of his brother at their last interview, as it changed, while he censured his marriage, and treated with disrespect the object of his conjugal affection. He remembered the anger repressed, the tear bursting forth, and the last glimpse he had of him, as he left his presence, most likely for ever.

In vain he now wished, that he had followed him to the door—that he had once shaken hands and owned his obligations to him before they had parted. In vain he wished too, that, in this extreme agony of his mind, he had such a friend to comfort him, as Henry had ever proved.

CHAPTER IX.

THE avocations of an elevated life erase the deepest impressions. The dean in a few months recovered from those which his brother's departure first made upon him: and he would now at times even condemn, in anger, Henry's having so hastily abandoned him and his native country, in resentment, as he conceived, of a few misfortunes which his usual fortitude should have taught him to have borne. Yet was he still desirous of his return, and wrote two or three letters expressive of his wish, which he anxiously endeavoured should reach him. But many years having elapsed without any intelligence from him, and a report having arrived, that he, and all the party with whom he went, were slain by the savage inhabitants of the island, William's despair of seeing his brother again caused the desire to diminish; while attention and affection to a still nearer and dearer relation than Henry had ever been to him, now chiefly engaged his mind.

Lady Clementina had brought him a son, on whom from his infancy, he doated—and the boy, in riper years, possessing a handsome person and evincing a quickness of parts, gratified the father's darling passion, pride, as well as the mother's vanity.

The dean had, besides this child, a domestic comfort highly gratifying to his ambition: the bishop of * * * * became intimately acquainted with him soon after his marriage, and from his daily visits had become, as it were, a part of the family. This was much honour to the dean, not only as the bishop was his superior in the church, but was of that part of the bench whose blood is ennobled by a race of ancestors, and to which all wisdom on the plebeian side crouches in humble respect.

Year after year rolled on in pride and grandeur ; the bishop and the dean passing their time in attending levees and in talking politics ; Lady Clementina passing hers in attending routs and in talking of *herself*, till the son arrived at the age of thirteen.

Young William passed *his* time, from morning till night, with persons who taught him to walk, to ride, to talk, to think like a man—a foolish man, instead of a wise child, as nature designed him to be.

This unfortunate youth was never permitted to have one conception of his own—all were taught him—he was never once asked, “ what he thought ; ” but men were paid to tell him “ how to think.” He was taught to revere such and such persons, however unworthy of his reverence ; to believe such and such things, however unworthy of his credit : and to act so and so, on such and such occasions, however unworthy of his feelings.

Such were the lessons of the tutors assigned him by his father—those masters whom his mother gave him did him less mischief ; for though they distorted his limbs and made his manners effeminate, they did not interfere beyond the body.

Mr. Norwynne (the family name of his father, and though but a school-boy, he was called *Mister*) could talk on history, on politics, and on religion ; surprisingly to all who never listened to a parrot or magpie—for he merely repeated what had been told to him without one reflection upon the sense or probability of his report. He had been praised for his memory ; and to continue that praise, he was so anxious to retain every sentence he had heard, or he had read, that the poor creature had no time for one native idea, but could only re-deliver his tutors’ lessons to his father, and his father’s to his tutors. But, whatever he said or did, was the admiration of

all who came to the house of the dean, and who knew he was an only child. Indeed, considering the labour that was taken to spoil him, he was rather a commendable youth; for, with the pedantic folly of his teachers, the blind affection of his father and mother, the obsequiousness of the servants, and flattery of the visitors, it was some credit to him that he was not an idiot, or a brute—though when he imitated the manners of a man, he had something of the latter in his appearance; for he would grin and bow to a lady, catch her fan in haste when it fell, and hand her to her coach, as thoroughly void of all the sentiment which gives grace to such tricks, as a monkey.

CHAPTER X.

ONE morning in winter, just as the dean, his wife, and darling child, had finished their breakfast at their house in London, a servant brought in a letter to his master, and said "the man waited for an answer."

"Who is the man?" cried the dean, with all that terrifying dignity with which he never failed to address his inferiors, especially such as waited on his person.

The servant replied with a servility of tone equal to the haughty one of his master, "he did not know; but that the man looked like a sailor, and had a boy with him."

"A begging letter, no doubt," cried Lady Clementina.

"Take it back," said the dean, "and bid him send up word who he is, and what is his errand."

The servant went; and returning said, "He

comes from on board a ship; his captain sent him, and his errand is, he believes, to leave a boy he has brought with him."

"A boy!" cried the dean: "what have I to do with a boy? I expect no boy. What boy? What age?"

"He looks about twelve or thirteen," replied the servant.

"He is mistaken in the house," said the dean.

"Let me look at the letter again."

He did look at it, and saw plainly it was directed to himself—Upon a second glance, he had so perfect a recollection of the hand, as to open it instantaneously; and, after ordering the servant to withdraw, he read the following.—

"Zocotora Island, April 6.

"MY DEAR BROTHER WILLIAM,

"It is a long time since we have seen one another; but I hope not so long, that you have quite forgotten the many happy days we once passed together.

"I did not take my leave of you when I left England, because it would have been too much for me. I had met with a great many sorrows just at that time; one of which was, the misfortune of losing the use of my right hand by a fall from my horse, which accident robbed me of most of my friends; for I could no longer entertain them with my performance as I used to do; and so I was ashamed to see them or you; and that was the reason I came hither to try my fortune with some other adventurers.

"You have, I suppose, heard that the savages of the island put our whole party to death. But it was my chance to escape their cruelty. I was heart-broken for my comrades; yet, upon the whole, I do

not know that the savages were much to blame—we had no business to invade their territories ! and if they had invaded England, we should have done the same by them. My life was spared, because, having gained some little strength in my hand, during the voyage, I pleased their king when I arrived there, with playing on my violin.

“ They spared my child too, in pity to my lamentations, when they were going to put him to death.—Now, dear brother, before I say any more to you concerning my child, I will first ask your pardon for any offence I may have ever given you in all the time we lived so long together. I know you have often found fault with me, and I dare say I have been very often to blame ; but I here solemnly declare that I never did any thing purposely to offend you, but mostly, all I could, to oblige you—and I can safely declare, that I never bore you above a quarter of an hour’s resentment, for any thing you might say to me which I thought harsh.

“ Now, dear William, after being in this island eleven years, the weakness in my hand has unfortunately returned ; and yet there being no appearance of complaint, the un-informed islanders think it is all my obstinacy, and that I *will not* entertain them with my music, which makes me say that I *cannot* ; and they have imprisoned me, and threaten to put my son to death if I persist in my stubbornness any longer.

“ The anguish I feel in my mind takes away all hope of the recovery of strength in my hand ; and I have no doubt but that they intend in a few days to put their horrid threat into execution.

“ Therefore, dear brother William, hearing in my prison of a most uncommon circumstance, which is, that an English vessel is lying at a small distance

from the island, I have entrusted a faithful Negro to take my child to the ship, and deliver him to the captain, with a request that he may be sent (with this letter) to you, on the ship's arrival in England.

"Now, my dear dear brother William, in case the poor boy should live to come to you, I have no doubt but you will receive him; yet, excuse a poor fond father, if I say a word or two which I hope may prove in his favour.

"Pray, my dear brother, do not think it the child's fault, but mine, that you will find him so ignorant—he has always shown a quickness and a willingness to learn, and would, I dare say, if he had been brought up under your care, have been by this time a good scholar—but you know I am no scholar myself. Besides, not having any books here, I have only been able to teach my child by talking to him; and in all my conversations with him, I have never taken much pains to instruct him in the manners of my own country; thinking, that if ever he went over, he would learn them soon enough? and if he never *did* go over, that it would be as well he knew nothing about them.

"I have kept him also from the knowledge of every thing which I have thought pernicious in the conduct of the savages, except that I have now and then pointed out a few of their faults, in order to give him a true conception and a proper horror of them. At the same time I have taught him to love, and to do good to his neighbour, whoever that neighbour may be, and whatever may be his failings. Falsehood of every kind I included in this precept as forbidden, for no one can love his neighbour and deceive him.

"I have instructed him too, to hold in contempt all frivolous vanity, and all those indulgences which

he was never likely to obtain. He has learned all that I have undertaken to teach him; but I am afraid you will yet think he has learned too little.

“Your wife, I fear, will be offended at his want of politeness, and perhaps proper respect for a person of her rank: but indeed he is very tractable, and can, without severity, be amended of all his faults; and though you will find he has many, yet, pray my dear brother, pray my dear brother William, call to mind he has been a dutiful and an affectionate child to me; and that, had it pleased Heaven we had lived together for many years to come, I verily believe I should never have experienced one mark of his disobedience.

“Farewell for ever, my dear dear brother William—and if my poor, kind, affectionate child should live to bring you this letter, sometimes speak to him of me; and let him know, that for twelve years he was my sole comfort; and that, when I sent him from me, in order to save his life, I laid down my head upon the floor of the cell in which I was confined, and prayed that Heaven might end my days before the morning.”

* * * * *

This was the conclusion of the letter, except four or five lines which (with his name) were so much blotted, apparently with tears, that they were illegible.



CHAPTER XI.

WHILE the dean was reading to himself this letter, his countenance frequently changed, and once or twice the tears streamed from his eyes. When it was finished, he exclaimed,

"My brother has sent his child to me, and I will be a parent to him." He was rushing towards the door, when Lady Clementina stopped him.

"Is it proper, do you think, Mr. Dean, that all the servants in the house should be witnesses to your meeting with your brother and your nephew in the state in which they must be at present? Send for them into a private apartment."

"My brother!" cried the dean, "Oh! that it *were* my brother! The man is merely a person from the ship, who has conducted his child hither."

The bell was rung, money was sent to the man, and orders given that the boy should be shown up immediately.

While young Henry was walking up the stairs, the dean's wife was weighing in her mind in what manner it would most redound to her honour to receive him; for her vanity taught her to believe that the whole inquisitive world pried into her conduct, even upon every family occurrence.

Young William was wondering to himself what kind of an unpolished monster his beggarly cousin would appear; and was contemplating how much the poor youth would be surprised, and awed by his superiority.

The dean felt no other sensation than an impatient desire of beholding the child.

The door opened—and the son of his brother Henry, of his benefactor, entered.

The habit he had on when he left his father, having been of slight texture, was worn out by the length of the voyage, and he was in the dress of a sailor-boy. Though about the same age with his cousin, he was something taller: and though a strong family resemblance appeared between the two youths, he was handsomer than William; and from a simplicity spread over his countenance, a quick

impatience in his eye—which denoted anxious curiosity, and childish surprise at every new object which presented itself—he appeared younger than his informed and well-bred cousin.

He walked into the room, not with a dictated obeisance, but with a hurrying step, a half pleased, yet a half frightened look, an instantaneous survey of every person present; not as demanding “what they thought of him,” but expressing almost as plainly as in direct words, “what he thought of them.” For all alarm in respect to his safety and reception seemed now wholly forgotten, in the curiosity which the sudden sight of strangers, such as he had never seen in his life before, excited: and as to *himself*, he did not appear to know there was such a person existing: his whole faculties were absorbed in *others*.

The dean’s reception of him did honour to his sensibility, and his gratitude to his brother. After the first affectionate gaze, he ran to him, took him in his arms, sat down, drew him to him, held him between his knees, and repeatedly exclaimed, “I will repay to you all I owe to your father.”

The boy, in return, hugged the dean round the neck, kissed him, and exclaimed,

“Oh! you *are* my father—you have just such eyes, and such a forehead—indeed you would be almost the same as he, if it were not for that great white thing which grows upon your head!”

Let the reader understand, that the dean, fondly attached to every ornament of his dignified function, was never seen (unless caught in bed) without an enormous wig. With this, young Henry was enormously struck; having never seen so unbecoming a decoration, either in the savage island from whence he came, or on board the vessel in which he sailed.

“Do you imagine,” cried his uncle, laying his

hand gently on the reverend habiliment, "that this grows?"

"What is on *my* head grows," said young Henry, "and so does that which is upon my father's."

"But now you are come to Europe, Henry, you will see many persons with such things as these, which they put on and take off."

"Why do you wear such things?"

"As a distinction between us and inferior people: they are worn to give an importance to the wearer."

"That is just as the savages do; they hang brass nails, wire, buttons, and entrails of beasts all over them, to give them importance."

The dean now led his nephew to Lady Clementina, and told him, "she was his aunt, to whom he must behave with the utmost respect."

"I will, I will," he replied: "for she, I see, is a person of importance too: she has, very nearly, such a white thing upon her head as you have!"

His aunt had not yet fixed in what manner it would be advisable to behave; whether with intimidating grandeur, or with amiable tenderness. While she was hesitating between both, she felt a kind of jealous apprehension that her son was not so engaging either in his person or address as his cousin; and therefore she said,

"I hope, dean, the arrival of this child will give you a still higher sense of the happiness we enjoy in our own. What an instructive contrast between the manners of the one, and of the other!"

"It is not the child's fault," returned the dean, "that he is not so elegant in his manners as his cousin. Had William been bred in the same place, he would have been as unpolished as this boy."

"I beg your pardon, sir," said young William with a formal bow and a sarcastic smile, "I as-

sure you, several of my tutors have told me, that I appear to know many things as it were by instinct."

Young Henry fixed his eyes upon his cousin, while, with steady self-complacency, he delivered this speech: and no sooner was it concluded than Henry cried out in a kind of wonder,

"A little man! as I am alive, a little man! I did not know there were such little men in this country! I never saw one in my life before!"

"This is a boy," said the dean, "a boy not older than yourself."

He put their hands together, and William gravely shook hands with his cousin.

"It *is* a man," continued young Henry—then stroked his cousin's chin. No no, I do not know whether it is or not."

"I tell you again," said the dean, "he is a boy of your own age: you and he are cousins, for I am his father."

"How can that be?" said young Henry: "he called you *Sir*."

"In this country," said the dean, "polite children do not call their parents *father* and *mother*."

"Then don't they sometimes forget to love them as such?" asked Henry.

His uncle became now impatient to interrogate him in every particular concerning his father's state. Lady Clementina felt equal impatience to know where the father was: whether he were coming to live with them, wanted any thing of them, and every circumstance in which her vanity was interested. Explanations followed all these questions; but which exactly agreeing with what the elder Henry's letter has related, require no recital here.

CHAPTER XII.

THAT vanity which presided over every thought and deed of Lady Clementina was the protector of young Henry within her house: it represented to her how amiable her conduct would appear in the eye of the world, should she condescend to treat this destitute nephew as her own son; what envy such heroic virtue would excite in the hearts of her particular friends, and what grief in the bosoms of all those who did not like her.

The dean was a man of no inconsiderable penetration: he understood the thoughts which, upon this occasion, passed in the mind of his wife; and in order to insure her kind treatment of the boy, instead of reproaching her for the cold manner in which she had at first received him, he praised her tender and sympathetic heart, for having shown him so much kindness, and thus stimulated her vanity to be praised still more.

William, the mother's own son, far from apprehending a rival in this savage boy, was convinced of his own preeminence, and felt an affection for him—though rather as a foil than as a cousin. He sported with his ignorance upon all occasions, and even lay in wait for circumstances that might expose it: while young Henry, strongly impressed with every thing which appeared new to him, expressed, without reserve, the sensations which those novelties excited: wholly careless of the construction put on his observations.

He never appeared either offended or abashed when laughed at; but still pursued his questions, and still discovered his wonder at many replies made to him, though "simpleton," "poor silly boy," and "idiot," were vociferated around him from his

cousin, his aunt, and their constant visitor the bishop.

His uncle would frequently undertake to instruct him ; so indeed would the bishop ; but Lady Clementina, her son, and the greatest part of her companions, found something so irresistibly ridiculous in his remarks, that nothing but immoderate laughter followed : they thought such folly had even merit in the way of entertainment, and they wished him no wiser.

Having been told, that every morning, on first seeing his uncle, he was to make a respectful bow, and coming into the dean's dressing-room just as he was out of bed, his wig lying on the table, Henry appeared at a loss which of the two he should bow to—at last he gave the preference to his uncle ; but, afterwards, bowed reverently to the wig. In this, he did what he conceived was proper, from the introduction which the dean, on his first arrival, had given him to this venerable stranger ; for, in reality, Henry had a contempt for all finery ; and had called even his aunt's jewels, when they were first shown to him, "trumpery," asking "what they were good for?" But being corrected in this disrespect, and informed of their high value, he, like a good convert, gave up his reason to his faith : and becoming, like all converts, over-zealous, he now believed there was great worth in all gaudy appearances, and even respected the ear-rings of Lady Clementina almost as much as he respected herself.

CHAPTER XIII.

IT was to be lamented, that when young Henry had been several months in England, had been taught

to read, and had, of course, in the society in which he lived, seen much of the enlightened world, yet the natural expectation of his improvement was by no means answered.

Notwithstanding the sensibility, which upon various occasions he manifested in the most captivating degree, notwithstanding the seeming gentleness of his nature upon all occasions, there now appeared, in most of his inquiries and remarks, a something which demonstrated either a stupid or troublesome disposition; either dulness of conception, or an obstinacy of perseverance in comments, and in arguments, which were glaringly false.

Observing his uncle one day offended with his coachman, and hearing him say to him in a very angry tone, "You shall never drive me again"—

The moment the man quitted the room, Henry (with his eyes fixed in the deepest contemplation) repeated five or six times, in a half whisper to himself,

"You shall never drive me again."

"You shall never drive me again."

The dean at last called to him "What do you mean by thus repeating my words?"

"I am trying to find out what *you* meant," said Henry.

"What! don't you know?" cried his enlightened cousin: "Richard is turned away: he is never to get upon our coach-box again, never to drive any of us more."

"And was it pleasure to drive us, cousin? I am sure I have often pitied him: it rained sometimes very hard when he was on the box; and sometimes Lady Clementina has kept him a whole hour at the door all in the cold and snow: was that pleasure?"

"No," replied young William.

"Was it honour, cousin?"

"No," exclaimed his cousin with a contemptuous smile.

"Then why did my uncle say to him, as a punishment, 'he should never'?"——

"Come hither, child," said the dean, "and let me instruct you: your father's negligence has been inexcusable. There are in society," continued the dean, "rich and poor; the poor are born to serve the rich."

"And what are the rich born for?"

"To be served by the poor."

"But suppose the poor would not serve them?"

"Then they must starve."

"And so poor people are permitted to live, only upon condition that they wait upon the rich?"

"Is that a hard condition? or if it were, they will be rewarded in a better world than this?"

"Is there a better world than this?"

"Is it possible you do not know there is?"

"I heard my father once say something about a world to come; but he stopt short, and said I was too young to understand what he meant."

"The world to come," returned the dean, "is where we shall go after death; and there no distinction will be made between rich and poor—all persons there will be equal."

"Aye, now I see what makes it a better world than this. But cannot this world try to be as good as that?"

"In respect to placing all persons on a level, it is utterly impossible: God has ordained it otherwise."

"How! has God ordained a distinction to be made, and will not make any himself?"

The dean did not proceed in his instructions: he now began to think his brother in the right, and that the boy was too young, or too weak, to comprehend the subject.

CHAPTER XIV.

IN addition to his ignorant conversation upon many topics, young Henry had an incorrigible misconception and misapplication of many *words*. His father having had but few opportunities of discoursing with him, upon account of his attendance at the court of the savages; and not having books in the island, he had consequently many words to learn of this country's language when he arrived in England: this task his retentive memory made easy to him; but his childish inattention to their proper signification still made his want of education conspicuous.

He would call *compliments*, *lies*—*Reserve* he would call *pride*—*stateliness*, *affectation*—and for the words *war* and *battle*, he constantly substituted the word *massacre*.

"Sir," said William to his father, one morning as he entered the room, "do you hear how the canons are firing, and the bells ringing?"

"Then I dare say," cried Henry, "there has been another massacre."

The dean called to him in anger, "Will you never learn the right use of words? You mean to say a battle."

"Then what is a massacre?" cried the frightened, but still curious Henry.

"A massacre," replied his uncle, "is when a number of people are slain—"

"I thought," returned Henry, "soldiers had been people!"

"You interrupted me," said the dean, "before I finished my sentence. Certainly, both soldiers and sailors are people, but they engage to die by their own free will and consent."

"What! all of them?"

"Most of them."

"But the rest are massacred?"

The dean answered, "The number who go to battle unwillingly, and by force, are few; and for the others, they have previously sold their lives to the state."

"For what?"

"For soldiers' and sailors' pay."

"My father used to tell me, we must not take away our own lives; but he forgot to tell me, we might sell them for others to take away."

"William," said the dean to his son, his patience tired with his nephew's persevering nonsense, "explain to your cousin the difference between a battle and a massacre."

"A massacre," said William, rising from his seat, and fixing his eyes alternately upon his father, his mother, and the bishop (all of whom were present) for their approbation, rather than the person's to whom his instructions were to be addressed—"a massacre," said William, "is when human beings are slain, who have it not in their power to defend themselves."

"Dear cousin William," said Henry, "that must ever be the case with every one who is killed."

After a short hesitation, William replied, "In massacres, people are put to death for no crime, but merely because they are objects of suspicion."

"But in battle," said Henry, "the persons put to death are not even suspected."

The bishop now condescended to end this dispute by saying emphatically,

"Consider, young savage, that in battle neither the infant, the aged, the sick, nor infirm are involved, but only those in the full prime of health and vigour."

As this argument came from so great and reverend

a man as the bishop, Henry was obliged, by a frown from his uncle, to submit, as one refuted; although he had an answer at the veriest tip of his tongue, which it was torture to him not to utter. What he wished to say must ever remain a secret. The church has its terrors as well as the law; and Henry was awed by the dean's tremendous wig, as much as Pater-noster Row is awed by the attorney-general.

CHAPTER XV.

IF the dean had loved his wife but moderately, seeing all her faults clearly as he did, he must frequently have quarreled with her: if he had loved her with tenderness, he must have treated her with a degree of violence in the hope of amending her failings: but having neither personal nor mental affection towards her, sufficiently interesting to give himself the trouble to contradict her will in any thing, he passed for one of the best husbands in the world. Lady Clementina went out when she liked, staid at home when she liked, dressed as she liked, and talked as she liked, without a word of disapprobation from her husband, and all—because he cared nothing about her.

Her vanity attributed this indulgence to inordinate affection; and observers in general thought her happier in her marriage, than the beloved wife who bathes her pillow with tears by the side of an angry husband, whose affection is so excessive, that he unkindly upbraids her because she is—less than perfection.

The dean's wife was not so dispassionately considered by some of his acquaintance as by himself;

for they would now and then hint at her foibles : but this great liberty she also conceived to be the effect of most violent love, or most violent admiration : and such would have been her construction, had they commended her follies—had they totally slighted, or had they beaten her.

Amongst those acquaintances, the aforesaid bishop, by far the most frequent visitor, did not come merely to lounge an idle hour, but he had a more powerful motive ; the desire of fame, and dread of being thought a man receiving large emolument for unimportant service.

The dean, if he did not procure him the renown he wished, still preserved him from the apprehended censure.

The elder William was to his negligent or ignorant superiors in the church, such as an apt boy at school is to the rich dunces—William performed the prelates' tasks for them, and they rewarded him—not indeed with toys or money, but with their countenance, their company, their praise. And scarcely was there a sermon preached from the patrician part of the bench, in which the dean did not fashion some periods, blot out some uncouth phrases, render some obscure sentiments intelligible, and was the certain person, when the work was printed, to correct the press.

This honourable and right reverend bishop delighted in printing and publishing his works ; or rather the entire works of the dean, which passed for his : and so degradingly did William, the shop-keeper's son, think of his own honest extraction, that he was blinded, even to the loss of honour, by the lustre of this noble acquaintance : for, though in other respects he was a man of integrity, yet, when the gratification of his friend was in question,

he was a liar; he not only disowned his giving him aid in any of his publications, but he never published any thing in his own name, without declaring to the world, "that he had been obliged for several hints on the subject, for many of the most judicious corrections, and for those passages in page so and so (naming the most eloquent parts of the work) to his noble and learned friend the bishop."

The dean's wife being a fine lady—while her husband and his friend pored over books or their own manuscripts at home, she ran from house to house, from public amusement to public amusement; but much less for the pleasure of *seeing* than for that of being *seen*. Nor was it material to her enjoyment whether she were observed, or welcome, where she went, as she never entertained the smallest doubt of either; but rested assured that her presence roused curiosity and dispensed gladness all around.

One morning she went forth to pay her visits, all smiles, such as she thought captivating: she returned, all tears, such as she thought no less endearing.

Three ladies accompanied her home, entreating her to be patient under a misfortune to which even kings are liable; namely, defamation.

Young Henry, struck with compassion at grief, of which he knew not the cause, begged to know "what was the matter?"

"Inhuman monsters, to treat a woman thus!" cried his aunt in a fury—casting the corner of her eye into a looking-glass, to see how rage became her.

"But, comfort yourself," said one of her companions: "few people will believe you merit the charge."

"But few! if only one believe it, I shall call my

reputation lost, and I will shut myself up in some lonely hut, and for ever renounce all that is dear to me!"

"What! all your fine clothes?" said Henry, in amazement.

"Of what importance will my best dresses be, when nobody would see them?"

"You would see them yourself, dear aunt; and I am sure nobody admires them more."

"Now you speak of that," said she, "I do not think this gown I have on becoming—I am sure I look ——"

The dean, with the bishop (to whom he had been reading a treatise just going to the press, which was to be published in the name of the latter, though written by the former), now entered, to inquire why they had been sent for in such haste.

"Oh, dean! oh, my lord bishop!" she cried, resuming that grief which the thoughts of her dress had for a time dispelled—"My reputation is destroyed—a public print has accused me of playing deep at my own house, and winning all the money."

"The world will never reform," said the bishop: "all our labour, my friend, is thrown away."

"But is it possible," cried the dean, "that any one has dared to say this of you?"

"Here it is in print," said she, holding out a newspaper.

"The dean read the paragraph, and then exclaimed, "I can forgive a falsehood *spoken*—the warmth of conversation may excuse it—but to *write* and *print* an untruth is unpardonable—and I will prosecute this publisher."

"Still the falsehood will go down to posterity," said Lady Clementina; "and after ages will think I was a gambler."

"Comfort yourself, dear madam," said young

Henry, wishing to console her: "perhaps after ages may not hear of you; nor even the present age think much about you."

The bishop now exclaimed, after having taken the paper from the dean, and read the paragraph, "It is a libel, a rank libel, and the author must be punished."

"Not only the author, but the publisher," said the dean.

"Not only the publisher, but the printer," continued the bishop.

"And must my name be bandied about by lawyers in a common court of justice?" cried Lady Clementina. "How shocking to my delicacy!"

"My lord, it is a pity we cannot try them by the ecclesiastical court," said the dean, with a sigh.

"Or by the India delinquent bill," said the bishop, with vexation.

"So totally innocent as I am!" she vociferated with sobs. "Every one knows I never touch a card at home, and this libel charges me with playing at my own house—and though, whenever I do play, I own I am apt to win, yet it is merely for my amusement."

"Win or not win, play or not play," exclaimed both the churchmen, "this is a libel—no doubt, no doubt, a libel."

Poor Henry's confined knowledge of his native language tormented him so much with curiosity upon this occasion, that he went softly up to his uncle, and asked him in a whisper, "What is the meaning of the word libel?"

"A libel," replied the dean, in a raised voice, "is that which one person publishes to the injury of another."

"And what can the injured person do," asked Henry, "if the accusation should chance to be true?"

"Prosecute," replied the dean.

"But, then, what does he do if the accusation be false?"

"Prosecute likewise," answered the dean.

"How, uncle! is it possible that the innocent behave just like the guilty?"

"There is no other way to act."

"Why then, if I were the innocent, I would do nothing at all, sooner than I would act like the guilty. I would not persecute——"

"I said *prosecute*," cried the dean in anger. "Leave the room: you have no comprehension."

"Oh yes, now I understand the difference of the two words; but they sound so much alike, I did not at first observe the distinction. You said, 'the innocent *prosecute* but the guilty *persecute*.'" He bowed (convinced as he thought) and left the room.

After this modern star-chamber, which was left sitting, had agreed on its mode of vengeance, and the writer of the libel was made acquainted with his danger, he waited, in all humility, upon Lady Clementina, and assured her, with every appearance of sincerity,

"That she was not the person alluded to by the paragraph in question, but that the initials which she had conceived to mark out her name, were, in fact, meant to point out Lady Catherine Newland."

"But, Sir," cried Lady Clementina, "what could induce you to write such a paragraph upon Lady Catherine? She *never* plays."

"We know that, madam, or we dared not to have attacked her. Though we must circulate libels, madam, to gratify our numerous readers, yet no people are more in fear of prosecutions than authors and editors: therefore, unless we are deceived in our information, we always take care to libel the innocent—we apprehend nothing from them

—their own characters support them—but the guilty are very tenacious; and what they cannot secure by fair means, they will employ force to accomplish. Dear madam, be assured I have too much regard for a wife and seven small children, who are maintained by my industry alone, to have written anything in the nature of a libel upon your ladyship.”

CHAPTER XVI.

ABOUT this period the dean had just published a pamphlet in his own name, and in which that of his friend the bishop was only mentioned with thanks for hints, observations, and condescending encouragement to the author.

This pamphlet glowed with the dean's love for his country; and such a country as he described, it was impossible *not* to love. “Salubrious air, fertile fields, wood, water, corn, grass, sheep, oxen, fish, fowl, fruit, and vegetables,” were dispersed with the most prodigal hand;—“valiant men virtuous women; statesmen wise and just; tradesmen abounding in merchandise and money; husbandmen possessing peace, ease, plenty; and all ranks liberty.”—This brilliant description, while the dean read the work to his family, so charmed poor Henry, that he repeatedly cried out,

“I am glad I came to this country.”

But it so happened that a few days after, Lady Clementina, in order to render the delicacy of her taste admired, could eat of no one dish upon the table, but found fault with them all. The dean at length said to her,

“Indeed you are too nice: reflect upon the hundreds of poor creatures who have not a morsel or a

drop of any thing to subsist upon, except bread and water; and even of the first a scanty allowance, but for which they are obliged to toil six days in the week, from sun to sun."

"Pray, uncle," cried Henry, "in what country do these poor people live?"

"In this country," replied the dean.

Henry rose from his chair, ran to the chimney-piece, took up his uncle's pamphlet, and said, "I don't remember your mentioning them here."

"Perhaps I have not," answered the dean coolly.

Still Henry turned over each leaf of the book; but he could meet only with luxurious details of "the fruits of the earth, the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fishes of the sea."

"Why here is provision enough for all the people," said Henry: "why should they want? why do not they go and take some of these things?"

"They must not," said the dean, "unless they were their own."

"What! uncle, does no part of the earth, nor any thing which the earth produces, belong to the poor?"

"Certainly not."

"Why did not you say so then in your pamphlet?"

"Because it is what every body knows."

"Oh, then, what you have said in your pamphlet, is only what—nobody knows."

There appeared to the dean, in the delivery of this sentence, a satirical acrimony, which his irritability as an author could but ill forgive.

An author, it is said, has more acute feelings in respect to his works than any artist in the world besides.

Henry had some cause, on the present occasion, to think this observation just : for no sooner had he spoken the foregoing words, than his uncle took him by the hand out of the room ; and leading him to his study, there he enumerated his various faults, and having told him “ it was for all those, too long permitted with impunity, and not merely for the *present* impertinence, that he meant to punish him,” ordered him to close confinement in his chamber for a week.

In the mean time, the dean’s pamphlet (less hurt by Henry’s critique than *he* had been) was proceeding to the tenth edition, and the author acquiring literary reputation beyond what he had ever conferred on his friend the bishop.

The style, the energy, the eloquence of the work, was echoed by every reader who could afford to buy it—some few enlightened ones excepted, who chiefly admired the author’s *invention*.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE dean, in the good humour which the rapid sale of his book produced, once more took his nephew to his bosom ; and although the ignorance of young Henry upon the late occasions had offended him very highly, yet that self-same ignorance, evinced a short time after upon a different subject, struck his uncle as productive of a most rare and exalted virtue.

Henry had frequently, in his conversation, betrayed the total want of all knowledge in respect to religion or futurity : and the dean for this reason delayed taking him to church, till he had previously given him instructions *wherefore* he went.

A leisure morning arrived, on which he took his nephew to his study, and implanted in his youthful mind the first unconfused idea of the Creator of the universe !

The dean was eloquent, Henry was all attention; his understanding, expanded by time to the conception of a God—and not warped by custom, from the sensations which a just notion of that God inspires—dwelt with delight and wonder on the information given him !—lessons, which, instilled into the head of a senseless infant, too often produce, throughout his remaining life, an impious indifference to the truths revealed.

Yet, with all that astonished, that respectful sensibility which Henry showed on this great occasion ; he still expressed his opinion, and put questions to the dean, with his usual simplicity, till he felt himself convinced.

“ What ! ” cried he—after being informed of the attributes inseparable from the Supreme Being, and having received the injunction to offer prayers to him night and morning—“ What ! am I permitted to speak to Power Divine ? ”

“ At all times,” replied the dean.

“ How ! whenever I like ? ”

“ Whenever you like,” returned the dean.

“ I durst not,” cried Henry, “ make so free with the bishop : nor dare any of his attendants.”

“ The bishop,” said the dean, “ is the servant of God, and therefore must be treated with respect.”

“ With more respect than his Master ? ” asked Henry.

The dean not replying immediately to this question, Henry, in the rapidity of inquiry, ran on to another : “ But what am I to say, when I speak to the Almighty ? ”

"First, thank him for the favours he has bestowed on you."

"What favours?"

"You amaze me," cried the dean, "by your question! Do not you live in ease, in plenty, and happiness?"

"And do the poor and the unhappy thank him too, uncle?"

"No doubt: every human being glorifies him, for having been made a rational creature."

"And does my aunt and all her card-parties glorify him for that?"

The dean again made no reply, and Henry went on to other questions, till his uncle had fully instructed him as to the nature and the form of *prayer*; and now, putting into his hands a book, he pointed out to him a few short prayers, which he wished him to address to Heaven in his presence.

Whilst Henry bent his knees, as his uncle had directed, he trembled—turned pale—and held, for a slight support, on the chair placed before him.

His uncle went to him, and asked him "what was the matter."

"Oh!" cried Henry, "when I first came to your door with my poor father's letter, I shook for fear you would not look upon me; and I cannot help feeling even more now than I did then."

The dean embraced him with warmth—gave him confidence—and retired to the other side of the study, to observe his whole demeanour on this new occasion.

As he beheld his features varying between the passions of humble fear and fervent hope, his face sometimes glowing with the rapture of thanksgiving and sometimes with the blushes of contrition, he thus exclaimed apart:

"This is the true education on which to found the principles of religion. The favour conferred by Heaven in granting the freedom of petitions to its throne, can never be conceived with proper force, but by those whose most tedious moments during their infancy were *not* passed in prayer. Unthinking governors of childhood! to insult the Deity with a form of worship, in which the mind has no share; nay worse, has repugnance: and by the thoughtless habits of youth, prevent, even in age, devotion."

Henry's attention was so firmly fixed, that he forgot there was a spectator of his fervour; nor did he hear young William enter the chamber and even speak to his father.

At length closing his book, and rising from his knees, he approached his uncle and cousin with a sedateness in his air which gave the latter a very false opinion of the state of his youthful companion's mind.

"So, Mr. Henry," cried William, "you have been obliged, at last, to say your prayers."

The dean informed his son, "that to Henry it was no punishment to pray."

"He is the strangest boy I ever knew!" said William inadvertently.

"To be sure," said Henry, "I was frightened when I first knelt; but when I came to the words, *Father which art in heaven*, they gave me courage; for I know how merciful and kind a *father* is, beyond any one else."

The dean again embraced his nephew; let fall a tear to his poor brother Henry's misfortunes; and admonished the youth to show himself equally submissive to other instructions, as he had done to those which inculcate piety.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE interim between youth and manhood was passed by young William and young Henry in studious application to literature; some casual mistakes in our customs and manners on the part of Henry, some too close adherences to them on the side of William.

Their different characters, when boys, were preserved when they became men: Henry still retained that natural simplicity which his early destiny had given him; he wondered still at many things he saw and heard, and at times would venture to give his opinion, contradict, and even act in opposition to persons whom long experience and the approbation of the world had placed in situations which claimed his implicit reverence and submission.

Unchanged in all his boyish graces, young William, now a man, was never known to infringe upon the statutes of good-breeding; even though sincerity, his own free will, duty to his neighbour, with many other plebeian virtues and privileges, were the sacrifice.

William inherited all the pride and ambition of the dean—Henry, all his father's humility. And yet, so various and extensive is the acceptance of the word pride, that, on some occasions, Henry was proud even beyond his cousin. He thought it far beneath his dignity ever to honour, or contemplate with awe, any human being in whom he saw numerous failings. Nor would he, to ingratiate himself into the favour of a man above him, stoop to one servility, such as the haughty William daily practised.

"I know I am called proud," one day said William to Henry.

"Dear cousin," replied Henry, "it must be only, then, by those who do not know you: for to me you appear the humblest creature in the world."

"Do you really think so?"

"I am certain of it; or would you always give up your opinion to that of persons in a superior state, however inferior in their understanding? Would, else, their weak judgment immediately change yours, though, before, you had been decided on the opposite side? Now, indeed, cousin, I have more pride than you; for I never will stoop to act or to speak contrary to my feelings."

"Then you will never be a great man."

"Nor ever desire it, if I must first be a mean one."

There was in the reputation of these two young men another mistake, which the common retailers of character committed. Henry was said to be wholly negligent, while William was reputed to be extremely attentive to the other sex. William indeed was gallant, was amorous, and indulged his inclination to the libertine society of women; but Henry it was who *loved* them. He admired them at a reverential distance, and felt so tender an affection for the virtuous female, that it shocked him to behold, much more to associate with, the depraved and vicious.

In the advantages of person, Henry was still superior to William; and yet the latter had no common share of those attractions which captivate weak, thoughtless, or unskilful minds.

CHAPTER XIX.

ABOUT the time that Henry and William quitted college, and had arrived at their twentieth year, the

dean purchased a small estate in a village near to the country residence of Lord and Lady Bendham ; and, in the total want of society, the dean's family were frequently honoured, with invitations from the great house.

Lord Bendham, besides a good estate, possessed the office of a lord of the bed-chamber to his majesty. Historians do not ascribe much importance to the situation, or to the talents of nobles in this department, nor shall this little history. A lord of the bed-chamber is a personage well known in courts, and in all capitals where courts reside ; with this advantage to the inquirer, that in becoming acquainted with one of those noble characters, he becomes acquainted with all the remainder ; not only with those of the same kingdom, but those of foreign nations ; for, in whatever land, in whatever climate, a lord of the bed-chamber must necessarily be the self-same creature : one, wholly made up of observance, of obedience, of dependence, and of imitation—a borrowed character—a character formed by reflection.

The wife of this illustrious peer, as well as himself, took her hue, like the chameleon, from surrounding objects : her manners were not governed by her mind, but were solely directed by external circumstances. At court, humble, resigned, patient, attentive : at balls, masquerades, gaming-tables, and routs, gay, sprightly, and flippant : at her country seat, reserved, austere, arrogant, and gloomy.

Though in town her timid eye, in presence of certain personages, would scarcely uplift its trembling lid, so much she felt her own insignificance : yet, in the country, till Lady Clementina arrived, there was not one being of consequence enough to share in her acquaintance ; and she paid back to her inferiors there, all the humiliating slights, all the mortifications, which in London she received from those to whom *she* was inferior.

Whether in town or country, it is but justice to acknowledge, that in her own person she was strictly chaste; but in the country she extended that chastity even to the persons of others: and the young woman who lost her virtue in the village of Anfield, had better have lost her life. Some few were now and then found hanging or drowned, while no other cause could be assigned for their despair, than an imputation on the discretion of their character, and dread of the harsh purity of Lady Bendham. She would remind the parish priest of the punishment allotted for female dishonour, and by her influence had caused many an unhappy girl to do public penance, in their own or the neighbouring churches.

But this country rigour, in town, she could dispense withal; and, like other ladies of virtue, she there visited and received into her house the acknowledged mistresses of any man in elevated life: it was not therefore the crime, but the rank which the criminal held in society, that drew down Lady Bendham's vengeance: she even carried her distinction of classes in female error to such a very nice point, that the adulterous concubine of an elder brother was her most intimate acquaintance, whilst the less guilty unmarried mistress of the younger, she would not sully her lips to exchange a word with.

Lord and Lady Bendham's birth, education, talents, and propensities, being much on the same scale of eminence, they would have been a very happy pair, had not one great misfortune intervened—the lady never bore her lord a child—while every cottage of the village was crammed with half-starved children; whose father from week to week, from year to year, exerted his manly youth and wasted his strength in vain to protect them from

hunger; whose mother mourned over her new-born infant as a little wretch, sent into the world to deprive the rest of what already was too scanty for them: in the castle, which owned every cottage and all the surrounding land, and where one single day of feasting would have nourished for a month all the poor inhabitants of the parish, not one child was given to partake of the plenty. The curse of barrenness was on the family of the lord of the manor—the curse of fruitfulness upon the famished poor.

This lord and lady, with an ample fortune both by inheritance and their sovereign's favour, had never yet the economy to be exempt from debts; still, over their splendid, their profuse table, they could contrive and plan excellent schemes "how the poor might live most comfortably with a little better management."

The wages of a labouring man, with a wife and half a dozen small children, Lady Bendham thought quite sufficient, if they would only learn a little economy.

"You know, my lord, those people never want to dress—shoes and stockings, a coat and waistcoat, a gown and a cap, a petticoat and a handkerchief, are all they want—fire, to be sure, in winter—then all the rest is merely for provision."

"I'll get a pen and ink," said young Henry, one day when he had the honour of being at their table, "and see what the *rest* amounts to."

"No, no accounts," cried my lord, "no summing up: but if you were to calculate, you must add to the receipts of the poor my gift at Christmas—last year, during the frost, no less than a hundred pounds."

"How benevolent!" exclaimed the dean.

"How prudent!" exclaimed Henry.

"What do you mean by prudent?" asked Lord Bentham. "Explain your meaning."

"No, my lord," replied the dean, "do not ask for an explanation: this youth is wholly unacquainted with our customs, and, though a man in stature, is but a child in intellects. Henry, have not I often cautioned you——"

"Whatever his thoughts are upon this subject," cried Lord Bentham, "I desire to know them."

"Why then, my lord," answered Henry, "I thought it was prudent in you to give a little; lest the poor, driven to despair, should take all."

"And if they had, they would have been hanged."

"Hanging, my lord, our history, or some tradition, says, was formerly adopted as a mild punishment, in place of starving."

"I am sure," cried Lady Bentham (who seldom spoke directly to the argument before her), "I am sure they ought to think themselves much obliged to us."

"That is the greatest hardship of all," cried Henry.

"What, Sir?" exclaimed the earl.

"I beg your pardon—my uncle looks displeased—I am very ignorant—I did not receive my first education in this country—and I find I think so differently from every one else, that I am ashamed to utter my sentiments."

"Never mind, young man," answered Lord Bentham; "we shall excuse your ignorance for once. Only inform us what it was you just now called *the greatest hardship of all*."

"It was, my lord, that what the poor receive to keep them from perishing should pass under the name of *gifts* and *bounty*. Health, strength, and

the will to earn a moderate subsistence, ought to be every man's security from obligation."

"I think a hundred pounds a great deal of money," cried Lady Bendham; "and I hope my lord will never give it again."

"I hope so too," cried Henry; "for if my lord would only be so good as to speak a few words for the poor as a senator, he might possibly for the future keep his hundred pounds, and yet they never want it."

Lord Bendham had the good-nature only to smile at Henry's simplicity, whispering to himself, "I had rather keep my ——" His last word was lost in the whisper.

CHAPTER XX.

IN the country—where the sensible heart is still more susceptible of impressions; and where the unfeeling mind, in the want of other men's wit to invent, forms schemes for its own amusement—our youths both fell in love: if passions, that were pursued on the most opposite principles, can receive the same appellation. William well versed in all the licentious theory, thought himself in love, because he perceived a tumultuous impulse cause his heart to beat while his fancy fixed on a certain object, whose presence agitated yet more his breast.

Henry thought himself not in love, because, while he listened to William on the subject, he found their sensations did not in the least agree.

William owned to Henry, that he loved Agnes, the daughter of a cottager in the village, and hoped to make her his mistress.

Henry felt that his tender regard for Rebecca, the daughter of the curate of the parish, did not inspire him even with the boldness to acquaint her with his sentiments ; much less to meditate one design that might tend to her dishonour.

While William was cautiously planning, how to meet in private, and accomplish the seduction of the object of his passion, Henry was endeavouring to fortify the object of *his* choice with every virtue. He never read a book from which he received improvement, that he did not carry it to Rebecca—never heard a circumstance which might assist towards her moral instruction, that he did not haste to tell it her—and once when William boasted

“ He knew he was beloved by Agnes ; ”

Henry said, with equal triumph, “ he had not dared to take the means to learn, nor had Rebecca dared to give one instance of her partiality.”

Rebecca was the youngest, and by far the least handsome daughter of four, to whom the Reverend Mr. Rymer, a widower, was father. The other sisters were accounted beauties ; and she, from her comparative want of personal charms, having been less beloved by her parents, and less caressed by those who visited them, than the rest, had for some time past sought other resources of happiness than the affection, praise, and indulgence of her fellow-creatures. The parsonage house in which this family lived was the forlorn remains of an ancient abbey : it had in later times been the habitation of a rich and learned rector, by whom, at his decease, a library was bequeathed for the use of every succeeding resident. Rebecca, left alone in this huge ruinous abode, while her sisters were paying stated visits in search of admiration, passed her solitary hours in reading. She not merely read—

she thought : the choicest English books from this excellent library taught her to *think* ; and reflection fashioned her mind to bear the slights, the mortifications of neglect, with a patient dejection, rather than with an indignant or a peevish spirit.

This resignation to injury and contumely gave to her perfect symmetry of person, a timid eye, a retiring manner, and spread upon her face a placid sweetness, a pale serenity indicating sense, which no wise connoisseur in female charms would have exchanged, for all the sparkling eyes and florid tints of her vain and vulgar sisters. Henry's soul was so enamoured of her gentle deportment, that in his sight she appeared beautiful ; while she, with an understanding competent to judge of his worth, was so greatly surprised, so prodigiously astonished at the distinction, the attention, the many offices of civility paid her, by him, in preference to her idolized sisters, that her gratitude for such unexpected favours had sometimes (even in his presence, and in that of her family) nearly drowned her eyes with tears. Yet they were only trifles, in which Henry had the opportunity or the power to give her testimony of his regard—trifles, often more grateful to the sensible mind than efforts of high importance ; and by which, the proficient in the human heart will accurately trace a passion, wholly concealed from the dull eye of the unskilled observer.

The first cause of amazement to Rebecca in the manners of Henry was, that he talked with *her* as well as with her sisters ; no visitor else had done so. In appointing a morning's or an evening's walk, he proposed *her* going with the rest ; no one had ever required her company before. When he called and she was absent, he asked where she was ; no one had ever missed her before. She thanked him most

sincerely, and soon perceived, that, at those times when he was present, company was more pleasing even than books.

Her astonishment, her gratitude, did not stop here—Henry proceeded in attention—he soon selected her from her sisters to tell her the news of the day; answered her observations the first; once gave her a sprig of myrtle from his bosom in preference to another who had praised its beauty; and once—never-to-be-forgotten kindness—sheltered her from a hasty shower with his *parapluie*, while he lamented, to her drenched companions,

“That he had but *one* to offer.”

From a man whose understanding and person they admire, how dear, how impressive on the female heart is every trait of tenderness! Till now, Rebecca had experienced none; not even of the parental kind: and merely from the overflowings of a kind nature (not in return for affection) had she ever loved her father and her sisters. Sometimes, repulsed by their severity, she transferred the fulness of an affectionate heart upon birds, or the brute creation: but now, her alienated mind was recalled and softened by a sensation, that made her long to complain of the burthen it imposed. Those obligations which exact silence are a heavy weight to the grateful; and Rebecca longed to tell Henry, “that even the forfeit of her life would be too little to express the full sense she had of the respect he paid to her.” But as modesty forbade not only every kind of declaration, but every insinuation purporting what she felt, she wept through sleepless nights from a load of suppressed explanation; yet still she would not have exchanged this trouble, for all the beauty of her sisters.

CHAPTER XXI.

OLD John and Hannah Primrose, a prudent hardy couple, who, by many years of peculiar labour and peculiar abstinence, were the least poor of all the neighbouring cottagers, had an only child (who has been named before) called Agnes : and this cottage girl was reckoned, in spite of the beauty of the elder Miss Rymers, by far the prettiest female in the village.

Reader of superior rank, if the passions which rage in the bosom of the inferior class of human kind are beneath your sympathy, throw aside this little history, for Rebecca Rymer and Agnes Primrose are its heroines.

But you, unprejudiced reader, whose liberal observations are not confined to stations, but who consider all mankind alike deserving your investigation ; who believe that there exist in some, knowledge without the advantage of instruction ; refinement of sentiment independent of elegant society ; honourable pride of heart without dignity of blood ; and genius destitute of art to render it conspicuous — *You* will, perhaps, venture to read on ; in hopes that the remainder of this story may deserve your attention, just as the wild herb of the forest, equally with the cultivated plant in the garden, claims the attention of the botanist.

Young William saw in young Agnes even more beauty than was beheld by others ; and on those days when he felt no inclination to ride, to shoot, or to hunt, he would contrive, by some secret device, the means to meet with her alone, and give her tokens (if not of his love) at least of his admiration of her beauty, and of the pleasure he enjoyed in her company.

Agnes listened, with a kind of delirious enchantment, to all her elevated and eloquent admirer uttered : and in return for his praises of her charms, and his equivocal replies in respect to his designs towards her, she gave to him her most undisguised thoughts, and her whole enraptured heart.

This harmless intercourse (as she believed it) had not lasted many weeks before she loved him : she even confessed she did, every time that any unwonted mark of attention from him struck with unexpected force her infatuated senses.

It has been said by a celebrated writer, upon the affection subsisting between the two sexes, " that there are many persons who, if they had never heard of the passion of love, would never have felt it." Might it not with equal truth be added, that there are many more, who having heard of it, and believing most firmly that they feel it, are nevertheless mistaken? Neither of these cases was the lot of Agnes. She experienced the sentiment before she ever heard it named in the sense with which it had possessed her—joined with numerous other sentiments : for genuine love, however rated as the chief passion of the human heart, is but a poor dependant, a retainer upon other passions ; admiration, gratitude, respect, esteem, pride in the object. Divest the boasted sensation of these, and it is no more than the impression of a twelvemonth, by courtesy, or vulgar error, termed love.

Agnes was formed by the rarest structure of the human frame, and destined by the tenderest thrillings of the human soul, to inspire and to experience real love : but her nice taste, her delicate thoughts, were so refined beyond the sphere of her own station in society, that nature would have produced this prodigy of attraction in vain, had not one of superior education and manners assailed her affec-

tions; and had she been accustomed to the conversation of men in William's rank of life, she had, perhaps, treated William's addresses with indifference; but, in comparing him with her familiar acquaintance, he was a miracle! His unremitting attention seemed the condescension of an elevated being, to whom she looked up with reverence, with admiration, with awe, with pride, with sense of obligation—and all these various passions which constitute true, and *never-to-be-eradicat*ed, love.

But in vain she felt and even avowed with her lips what every look, every gesture, had long denoted; William, with discontent, sometimes with anger, upbraided her for her false professions, and vowed, "that while one tender proof, which he fervently besought, was wanting, she did but aggravate his misery by less endearments."

Agnes had been taught the full estimation of female virtue: and if her nature could have detested any one creature in a state of wretchedness, it would have been the woman who had lost her honour: yet, for William, what would not Agnes forfeit? The dignity, the peace, the serenity, the innocence of her own mind, love soon encouraged her to fancy she could easily forego—and this same overpowering influence, at times so forcibly possessed her, that she even felt a momentary transport in the contemplation "of so precious a sacrifice to him." But then she loved her parents; and their happiness she could not prevail with herself to barter even for *his*. She wished he would demand some other pledge of her attachment to him; for there was none but this, her ruin in no other shape, that she would deny at his request. While thus she deliberated, she prepared for her fall.

Bred up with strict observance both of his moral and religious character, William did not dare to tell

an unequivocal lie even to his inferiors—he never promised Agnes he would marry her ; nay even, he paid so much respect to the forms of truth, that no sooner was it evident that he had obtained her heart, her whole soul entire—so that loss of innocence would be less terrifying than separation from him—no sooner did he perceive this, than he candidly told her he “ could never make her his wife.” At the same time he lamented “ the difference of their births, and the duty he owed his parents’ hopes,” in terms so pathetic to her partial ear, that she thought him a greater object of compassion in his attachment, even than herself ; and was now urged by pity to remove the cause of his complainings.

One evening Henry accidentally passed the lonely spot where William and she constantly met : he observed his cousin’s impassioned eye, and her affectionate yet fearful glance. William, he saw, took delight in the agitation of mind, in the strong apprehension mixed with the love of Agnes : this convinced Henry that either he or himself was not in love : for his heart told him he would not have beheld such emotions of tenderness mingled with such marks of sorrow, upon the countenance of Rebecca, for the wealth of the universe.

The first time he was alone with William after this, he mentioned his observation on Agnes’s apparent affliction, and asked “ why her grief was the result of their stolen meetings.”

“ Because,” replied William, “ her professions are unlimited, while her manners are reserved ; and I accuse her of loving me with unkind moderation, while I love her to distraction.”

“ You design to marry her then ?”

“ How can you degrade me by the supposition ?”

“ Would it degrade you more to marry her than to make her your companion ? To talk with her for

hours in preference to all other company? To wish to be endeared to her by still closer ties?"

"But all this is not raising her to the rank of my wife."

"It is still raising her to that rank for which wives alone were allotted."

"You talk wildly! I tell you I love her; but not enough, I hope, to marry her."

"But too much, I hope, to undo her?"

"That must be her own free choice—I make use of no unwarrantable methods."

"What are the warrantable ones?"

"I mean, I have made her no false promises—offered no pretended settlement—vowed no eternal constancy."

"But you have told her you love her: and, from that confession, has she not reason to expect every protection which even promises could secure?"

"I cannot answer for her expectations; but I know if she should make me as happy as I ask, and I should then forsake her, I shall not break my word."

"Still she will be deceived; for you will falsify your looks."

"Do you think she depends on my looks?"

"I have read in some book, *Looks are the lover's sole dependence.*"

"I have no objection to her interpreting mine in her favour: but then for the consequences, she will have herself and only herself to blame."

"Oh! Heaven!"

"What makes you exclaim so vehemently?"

"A forcible idea of the bitterness of that calamity which inflicts self-reproach! Oh rather deceive her—leave her the consolation to reproach *you*, rather than *herself*."

"My honour will not suffer me."

"Exert your honour, and never see her more."

"I cannot live without her."

"Then live with her by the laws of your country; and make her and yourself both happy."

"Am I to make my father and my mother miserable? They would disown me for such a step."

"Your mother, perhaps, might be offended, but your father could not—Remember the sermon he preached but last Sunday, upon—*the shortness of this life—contempt of all riches and worldly honours in balance with a quiet conscience*—and the assurance he gave us, *that the greatest happiness enjoyed upon earth was to be found under an humble roof, with heaven in prospect.*"

"My father is a very good man," said William; "and yet, instead of being satisfied with an humble roof, he looks impatiently forward to a bishop's palace."

"He is so very good then," said Henry, "that perhaps, seeing the dangers to which men in exalted stations are exposed, he has such extreme philanthropy, and so little self-love, he would rather that *himself* should brave those perils incidental to wealth and grandeur than any other person."

"You are not yet civilized," said William; "and to argue with you is but to instruct, without gaining instruction."

"I know, sir," replied Henry, "that you are studying the law most assiduously, and indulge flattering hopes of rising to eminence in your profession: but let me hint to you—that though you may be perfect in the knowledge how to administer the commandments of men, unless you keep in view the precepts of God, your judgment, like mine, will be fallible."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE dean's family passed this first summer at the new-purchased estate so pleasantly, that they left it with regret when winter called them to their house in town.

But if some felt concern in quitting the village of Anfield, others who were left behind felt the deepest anguish. Those were not the poor—for rigid attention to the religion and morals of people in poverty, and total neglect of their bodily wants, was the dean's practice. He forced them to attend church every Sabbath; but whether they had a dinner on their return was too gross and temporal an inquiry for his spiritual fervour. Good of the soul was all he aimed at; and this pious undertaking, besides his diligence as a pastor, required all his exertion as a magistrate—for to be very poor and very honest, very oppressed yet very thankful, is a degree of sainted excellence not often to be attained, without the aid of zealous men to frighten into virtue.

Those, then, who alone felt sorrow at the dean's departure, were two young women, whose parents, exempt from indigence, preserved them from suffering under his unpitying piety; but whose discretion had not protected them from the bewitching smiles of his nephew, and the seducing wiles of his son.

The first morning that Rebecca rose and knew Henry was gone till the following summer, she wished she could have laid down again and slept away the whole long interval. Her sisters' peevishness, her father's austerity, she foresaw, would be insupportable now that she had experienced Henry's kindness, and he was no longer near to fortify her

patience. She sighed—she wept—she was unhappy.

But if Rebecca awoke with a dejected mind and an aching heart, what were the sorrows of Agnes? The only child of doating parents, she never had been taught the necessity of resignation—untutored, unread, unused to reflect, but knowing how to *feel*; what were her sufferings when, on waking, she called to mind that “William was gone,” and with him gone all that excess of happiness which his presence had bestowed, and for which she had exchanged her future tranquillity?

Loss of tranquillity even Rebecca had to bemoan: Agnes had still more—the loss of innocence!

Had William remained in the village, shame, even conscience perhaps, might have been silenced; but, separated from her betrayer, parted from the joys of guilt, and left only to its sorrows, every sting which quick sensibility could sharpen, to torture her, was transfixed in her heart. First came the recollection of a cold farewell from the man whose love she had hoped her yielding passion had for ever won; next, flashed on her thoughts her violated person; next, the crime incurred; then her cruelty to her parents; and, last of all, the horrors of detection.

She knew that as yet, by wariness, care, and contrivance, her meetings with William had been unsuspected; but, in this agony of mind, her fears foreboded an informer who would defy all caution; who would stigmatize her with a name—dear and desired by every virtuous female—abhorrent to the blushing harlot—the name of mother.

That Agnes, thus impressed, could rise from her bed, meet her parents and her neighbours with her usual smile of vivacity, and voice of mirth, was impossible: to leave her bed at all, to creep down

stairs, and reply in a faint broken voice to questions asked, were, in her state of mind, mighty efforts; and they were all to which her struggles could attain for many weeks.

William had promised to write to her while he was away: he kept his word; but not till the end of two months did she receive a letter. Fear for his health, apprehension of his death during this cruel interim, caused an agony of suspense, which, by representing him to her distracted fancy in a state of suffering, made him, if possible, still dearer to her. In the excruciating anguish of uncertainty, she walked with trembling steps through all weathers (when she could steal half a day while her parents were employed in labour abroad) to the post town, at six miles distance, to inquire for his long-expected, long wished-for letter. When at last it was given to her, that moment of consolation seemed to repay her for the whole time of agonizing terror she had endured. "He is alive!" she said, "and I have suffered nothing."

She hastily put this token of his health and his remembrance of her into her bosom, rich as an empress with a new-acquired dominion. The way from home, which she had trod with heavy pace, in the fear of renewed disappointment, she skimmed along on her return swift as a doe: the cold did not pierce, neither did the rain wet her. Many a time she put her hand upon the prize she possessed, to find if it were safe: once, on the road, she took it from her bosom, curiously viewed the seal and the direction, then replacing it, did not move her fingers from their fast gripe; till she arrived at her own house.

Her father and her mother were still absent. She drew a chair, and placing it near to the only window in the room, seated herself with ceremonious order;

then, gently drew forth her treasure ; laid it on her knee ; and with a smile that almost amounted to a laugh of gladness, once more inspected the outward part, before she would trust herself with the excessive joy of looking within.

At length the seal was broken—but the contents still a secret. Poor Agnes had learned to write as some youths learn Latin : so short a time had been allowed for the acquirement, and so little expert had been her master, that it took her generally a week to write a letter of ten lines, and a month to read one of twenty. But this being a letter on which her mind was deeply engaged, her whole imagination aided her slender literature, and at the end of a fortnight she had made out every word. They were these :—

“ D^r. AGNES,

“ I hope you have been well since we parted—I have been very well myself ; but I have been teased with a great deal of business, which has not given me time to write to you before. I have been called to the bar, which engages every spare moment ; but I hope it will not prevent my coming down to Anfield with my father in the summer.

“ I am, D^r. Agnes,

“ With gratitude for all the favours you have conferred on me,

“ Yours, &c.

“ W. N.”

To have beheld the illiterate Agnes trying for two weeks, day and night, to find out the exact words of this letter, would have struck the spectator with amazement, had he also understood the right, the delicate, the nicely proper sensations with which she was affected by every sentence it contained.

She wished it had been kinder, even for his sake who wrote it; because she thought so well of him, and desired still to think so well, that she was sorry at any faults which rendered him less worthy of her good opinion. The cold civility of his letter had this effect—her clear, her acute judgment felt it a kind of prevarication *to promise to write—and then write nothing that was hoped for*. But, enthralled by the magic of her passion, she shortly found excuses for the man she loved, at the expense of her own condemnation.

“He has only the fault of inconstancy,” she cried; “and that has been caused by *my* change of conduct. Had I been virtuous still, he had still been affectionate.” Bitter reflection!

Yet there was a sentence in the letter, that, worse than all the tenderness left out, wounded her sensibility; and she could not read the line, *gratitude for all the favours conferred on me*, without turning pale with horror, then kindling with indignation at the common-place thanks, which insultingly reminded her of her innocence given in exchange for unmeaning acknowledgments.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ABSENCE is said to increase strong and virtuous love, but to destroy that which is weak and sensual. In the parallel between young William and young Henry, this was the case; for Henry's real love increased, while William's turbulent passion declined in separation: yet had the latter not so much abated that he did not perceive a sensation, like a sudden shock of sorrow, on a proposal made him by his father, of entering the marriage state with a young wo-

man, the dependent niece of Lady Bendham; who, as the dean informed him, had signified her lord's and her own approbation of his becoming their nephew.

At the first moment William received this intimation from his father, his heart revolted with disgust from the object, and he instantly thought upon Agnes, with more affection than he had done for many weeks before. This was from the comparison between her and his proposed wife; for he had frequently seen Miss Sedgely at Lord Bendham's, but had never seen in her whole person, or manners, the least attraction to excite his love. He pictured to himself an unpleasant home with a companion so little suited to his taste, and felt a pang of conscience, as well as of attachment, in the thought of giving up for ever his poor Agnes.

But these reflections, these feelings lasted only for the moment: no sooner had the dean explained why the marriage was desirable, recited what great connections and what great patronage it would confer upon their family, than William listened with eagerness, and both his love and his conscience were, if not wholly quieted, at least for the present hushed.

Immediately after the dean had expressed to Lord and Lady Bendham his son's "sense of the honour and the happiness conferred on him; by their condescension in admitting him a member of their noble family"—Miss Sedgely received from her aunt nearly the same shock as William had done from his father. *For she (placed in the exact circumstance of her intended husband) had frequently seen the dean's son at Lord Bendham's but had never seen in his whole person or manners the least attraction to excite her love. She pictured to herself an unpleasant home with a companion so little suited to her taste:* and at this moment she felt a more

than usual partiality to the dean's nephew, finding the secret hope she had long indulged, of winning his affections, so near being thwarted.

But Miss Sedgeley, was too much subjected to the power of her uncle and aunt to have a will of her own, at least, to dare to utter it. She received the commands of Lady Bendham with her accustomed submission, while all the consolation for the grief they gave her was, "that she resolved to make a very bad wife."

"I shall not care a pin for my husband," said she to herself; "and so I will dress and visit, and do just as I like—he dares not be unkind because of my aunt. Besides, now I think again, it is not so disagreeable to marry *him* as if I were obliged to marry into any other family, because I shall see his cousin Henry as often, if not oftener than ever."

For Miss Sedgeley—whose person he did not like, and with her mind thus disposed—William began to force himself to shake off every little remaining affection, even all pity, for the unfortunate the beautiful, the sensible, the doating Agnes; and determined to place in a situation to look down with scorn upon her sorrows, this weak, this unprincipled woman.

Connections; interest, honours, were powerful advocates—his private happiness William deemed trivial, compared to public opinion—and to be under obligations to a peer, his wife's relation, gave greater renown in his servile mind than all the advantages which might accrue from his own intrinsic independent worth.

In the usual routine of pretended regard, and real indifference, sometimes disgust, between parties allied by what is falsely termed *prudence*, the intended union of Mr. Norwyme with Miss Sedgeley pro-

ceeded in all due form; and at their country seats at Anfield, during the summer, their nuptials were appointed to be celebrated.

William was now introduced into all Lord Benda-ham's courtly circles: his worldly soul was entranced in glare and show: he thought of nothing but places, pensions, titles, retinues: and stedfast, alert, unshaken in the pursuit of honours, neglected not the lesser means of rising to preferment—his own endowments. But in this round of attention to pleasures and to study, he no more complained to Agnes of "excess of business." Cruel as she had once thought that letter in which he thus apologized for slighting her, she at last began to think it was wondrous kind; for he never found time to send her another. Yet she had studied with all her most anxious care to write him an answer; such a one as might not lessen her understanding, which he had often praised, in his esteem.

Ah, William! even with less anxiety your beating, ambitious heart, panted for the admiration of an attentive auditory, when you first ventured to harangue in public!—With far less hope and fear (great as yours were) did you first address a crowded court, and thirst for its approbation on your efforts, than Agnes sighed for your approbation, when she took a pen and awkwardly scrawled over a sheet of paper. Near twenty times she began—but to a gentleman—and one she loved like William—what could she dare to say? Yet she had enough to tell, if shame had not interposed—or if remaining confidence in his affection had but encouraged her.

Overwhelmed by the first, and deprived of the last, her hand shook, her head drooped, and she dared not communicate what she knew must inevitably render her letter displeasing: and still

more depreciate her in his regard, as the occasion of incumbrance, and of injury to his moral reputation.

Her free, her liberal, her venturous spirit subdued, intimidated by the force of affection, she only wrote—

“ SIR,

“ I am sorry you have so much to do, and should be ashamed if you put it off to write to me. I have not been at all well this winter—I never before passed such a one in all my life, and I hope you will never know such a one yourself in regard to not being happy—I should be sorry if you did—think I would rather go through it again myself than you should. I long for the summer, the fields are so green, and every thing so pleasant at that time of the year—I always do long for the summer, but I think never so much in my life as for this that is coming—though sometimes I wish that last summer had never come. Perhaps you wish so too—and that this summer would not come either.

“ Hope you will excuse all faults, as I never learnt but one month.

“ Your obedient humble servant,

“ A. P.”

CHAPTER XXIV.

SUMMER arrived—and lords and ladies who had partaken of all the dissipation of the town, whom opera-houses, gaming-houses, and various other houses had detained whole nights from their peaceful home, were now poured forth from the metro-

polis, to imbibe the wholesome air of the farmer and peasant, and disseminate, in return, moral and religious principles.

Among the rest, Lord and Lady Bendham, strenuous opposers of vice in the poor, and gentle supporters of it in the rich, never played at cards, or had concerts on a Sunday, in the village, where the poor were spies—*he*, there, never gamed, nor drank, except in private—and *she*, banished from her doors every woman of sullied character. Yet poverty and idiotism are not the same—the poor can hear, can talk, sometimes can reflect—servants will tell their equals how they live in town—listeners will smile and shake their heads—and thus hypocrisy, instead of cultivating, destroys every seed of moral virtue.

The arrival of Lord Bendham's family at Anfield announced to the village that the dean's would quickly follow. Rebecca's heart bounded with joy at the prospect. Poor Agnes felt a sinking, a foreboding tremor, that wholly interrupted the joy of *her* expectations. She had not heard from William for five tedious months : she did not know whether he loved or despised—whether he thought of or had forgotten her. Her reason argued against the hope that he loved her—yet hope still subsisted : she would not abandon herself to despair while there was doubt : she “ had frequently been deceived by the appearance of circumstances ; and perhaps he might come all kindness—perhaps—even not like her the less for that indisposition which had changed her bloom to paleness, and the sparkling of her eyes to a pensive languor.”

Henry's sensations, on his return to Anfield were the self-same as Rebecca's were—sympathy in thought, sympathy in affection, sympathy in virtue, made them so. As he approached near the little village, he felt more light than usual. He had com-

mitted no trespass there, dreaded no person's reproach or inquiries; but his arrival might prove, at least to one object, the cause of rejoicing.

William's sensations were the reverse of these. In spite of his ambition, and the flattering view of one day accomplishing all to which it aspired, he often, as they proceeded on their journey, envied the gaiety of Henry, and felt an inward monitor that told him, "he must first act like Henry, to be as happy."

His intended marriage was still, to the families of both parties (except to the heads of the houses) a profound secret. Neither the servants, nor even Henry, had received the slightest intimation of the designed alliance; and this to William was matter of some comfort.

When men submit to act in contradiction to their principles, nothing is so precious as a secret. In their estimation, to have their conduct *known* is the essential mischief: while it is hid, they fancy the sin but half committed; and to the moiety of a crime they reconcile their feelings, till, in progression, the whole, when disclosed, appears trivial. He designed that Agnes should receive the news from himself by degrees, and in such a manner as to console her, or at least to silence her complaints:—and with the wish to soften the regret which he still felt on the prudent necessity of yielding her wholly up when his marriage should take place, he promised to himself some intervening hours of private meetings, which he hoped would produce satiety.

While Henry flew to Mr. Rymer's house with a conscience clear, and a face enlightened with gladness; while he met Rebecca with open-hearted friendship and frankness, which charmed her soul to peaceful happiness; William skulked around the cottage of Agnes, dreading detection; and when

towards midnight he found the means to obtain the company of the sad inhabitant, he grew so impatient at her tears and sobs, at the delicacy with which she withheld her caresses, that he burst into bitter upbraidings at her coyness; and at length (without discovering the cause of her peculiar agitation and reserve) abruptly left her, vowing "never to see her more."

As he turned away, his heart even congratulated him, "that he had made so discreet a use of his momentary disappointment, as thus to shake her off at once without farther explanation or excuse."

She, ignorant and illiterate as she was, knew enough of her own heart to judge of his, and to know that such violent affections and expressions, above all, such a sudden, heart-breaking manner of departure, were not the effects of love, nor even of humanity. She felt herself debased by a ruffian—yet still, having loved him when she thought him a far different character, the blackest proof of the deception could not erase a sentiment formed whilst she was deceived.

She passed the remainder of the night in anguish: but with the cheerful morning some cheerly thoughts consoled her. She thought "perhaps William by this time had found himself to blame; had conceived the cause of her grief and her distant behaviour, and had pitied her."

The next evening she waited, with anxious heart, for the signal that had called her out the foregoing night: in vain she watched, counted the hours, and the stars, and listened to the nightly stillness of the fields around: they were not disturbed by the tread of her lover. Day-light came; the sun rose in its splendour: William had not been near her, and it shone upon none so miserable as Agnes.

She now considered his word, "never to see her

more," as solemnly passed: she heard anew the impressive, the implacable tone in which the sentence was pronounced; and could look back on no late token of affection, on which to found the slightest hope that he would recal it.

Still, reluctant to despair—in the extremity of grief, in the extremity of fear for an approaching crisis which must speedily arrive, she (after a few days had elapsed) trusted a neighbouring peasant with a letter to deliver to Mr. Norwynne in private.

This letter, unlike the last, was dictated without the hope to please: no pains were taken with the style, no care in the formation of the letters: the words flowed from necessity; strong necessity guided her hand.

"SIR,

"I beg your pardon—pray don't forsake me all at once—see me one time more—I have something to tell you—it is what I dare tell nobody else—and what I am ashamed to tell you—yet pray give me a word of advice—what to do I don't know—I then will part, if you please, never to trouble you, never any more—but hope to part friends—pray do, if you please—and see me one time more.

"Your obedient,

"A. P."

These incorrect, inelegant lines produced this immediate reply:—

"TO AGNES PRIMROSE.

"I have often told you, that my honour is as dear to me as my life: my word is a part of that honour—you heard me say *I would never see you again*. I shall keep my word."

CHAPTER XXV.

WHEN the dean's family had been at Anfield about a month—one misty morning, such as portends a sultry day, as Henry was walking swiftly through a thick wood, on the skirts of the parish, he suddenly started on hearing a distant groan, expressive, as he thought, both of bodily and mental pain. He stopped to hear it repeated, that he might pursue the sound. He heard it again; and though now but in murmurs, yet as the tone implied excessive grief, he directed his course to that part of the wood from which it came.

As he advanced, in spite of the thick fog, he discerned the appearance of a female stealing away on his approach. His eye was fixed on this object; and regardless where he placed his feet, he soon shrunk back with horror, on perceiving they had nearly trod upon a new-born infant, lying on the ground!—a lovely male child, entered on a world where not one preparation had been made to receive him.

“Ah!” cried Henry, forgetting the person who had fled, and with a smile of compassion on the helpless infant, “I am glad I have found you—you give more joy to me, than you have done to your hapless parents. Poor dear,” continued he, while he took off his coat to wrap it in, “I will take care of you while I live—I will beg for you, rather than you shall want—but first, I will carry you to those who can at present do more for you than myself.”

Thus Henry said and thought, while he inclosed the child carefully in his coat, and took it in his arms. But proceeding to walk his way with it, an unlucky query struck him, *where he should go*.

“I must not take it to the dean's,” he cried,

"because Lady Clementina will suspect it is not nobly, and my uncle will suspect it is not lawfully, born. Nor must I take it to Lord Bendham's for the self-same reason, though, could it call Lady Bendham mother, this whole village, nay the whole country round, would ring with rejoicings for its birth. How strange!" continued he, "that we should make so little of human creatures, that one sent among us, wholly independent of his own high value, becomes a curse instead of a blessing by the mere accident of circumstances."

He now, after walking out of the wood, peeped through the folds of his coat to look again at his charge. He started, turned pale, and trembled to behold what, in the surprise of first seeing the child, had escaped his observation. Around its little throat was a cord entwined by a slipping noose, and drawn half way—as if the trembling hand of the murderer had revolted from its dreadful office, and he or she had left the infant to pine away in nakedness and hunger, rather than see it die.

Again Henry wished himself joy of the treasure he had found; and more fervently than before; for he had not only preserved one fellow-creature from death, but another from murder.

Once more he looked at his charge, and was transported to observe, upon its serene brow and sleepy eye, no traces of the dangers it had passed—no trait of shame either for itself or its parents—no discomposure at the unwelcome reception it was likely to encounter from a proud world! He now slipped the fatal string from its neck; and by this affectionate disturbance causing the child to cry, he ran (but he scarcely knew whither) to convey it to a better nurse.

He at length found himself at the door of his dear Rebecca—for so very happy Henry felt at the good

luck which had befallen him, that he longed to bestow a part of the blessing upon her he loved.

He sent for her privately out of the house to speak to him.—When she came,

“Rebecca,” said he (looking around that no one observed him), “Rebecca, I have brought you something you will like.”

“What is it?” she asked.

“You know, Rebecca, that you love deserted birds, strayed kittens, and motherless lambs: I have brought something more pitiable than any of these. Go, get a cap and a little gown, and then I will give it you.”

“A gown!” exclaimed Rebecca. “If you have brought me a monkey, much as I should esteem any present from *you*, indeed I cannot touch it.”

“A monkey!” repeated Henry, almost in anger:—then changing the tone of his voice, exclaimed in triumph,

“It is a child!”

On this he gave it a gentle pinch, that its cry might confirm the pleasing truth he spoke.

“A child!” repeated Rebecca in amaze.

“Yes, and indeed I found it.”

“Found it!”

“Indeed I did. The mother, I fear, had just forsaken it.”

“Inhuman creature!”

“Nay, hold, Rebecca! I am sure you will pity her when you see her child—you then will know she must have loved it—and you will consider how much she certainly had suffered, before she left it to perish in a wood.”

“Cruel!” once more exclaimed Rebecca.

“Oh! Rebecca, perhaps, had she possessed a home of her own she would have given it the best place in it: had she possessed money, she would

have dressed it with the nicest care: or had she been accustomed to disgrace, she would have gloried in calling it hers! But now, as it is, it is sent to us—to you and me, Rebecca—to take care of.”

Rebecca, soothed by Henry’s compassionate eloquence, held out her arms and received the important parcel; and, as she kindly looked in upon the little stranger,

“Now, are not you much obliged to me,” said Henry, “for having brought it to you? I know no one but yourself to whom I would have trusted it with pleasure.”

“Much obliged to you,” repeated Rebecca with a very serious face, “if I did but know what to do with it—where to put it—where to hide it from my father and sisters.”

“Oh! any where,” returned Henry. “It is very good—it will not cry. Besides, in one of the distant unfrequented rooms of your old abbey, through the thick walls and long gallery, an infant’s cry cannot pass. Yet, pray be cautious how you conceal it; for if it should be discovered by your father or sisters, they will take it from you, prosecute the wretched mother, and send the child to the parish.”

“I will do all I can to prevent them,” said Rebecca; “and I think I call to mind a part of the house where it *must* be safe. I know, too, I can take milk from the dairy, and bread from the pantry, without their being missed, or my father much the poorer. But if——”

That instant they were interrupted by the appearance of the stern curate at a little distance. Henry was obliged to run swiftly away, while Rebecca returned by stealth into the house with her innocent burthen.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THERE is a word in the vocabulary more bitter, more direful in its import, than all the rest. Reader, if poverty, if disgrace, if bodily pain, even if slighted love be your unhappy fate, kneel and bless Heaven for its beneficent influence, so that you are not tortured with the anguish of—*remorse*.

Deep contrition for past offences had long been the punishment of unhappy Agnes ; but, till the day she brought her child into the world, *remorse* had been averted. From that day, life became an insupportable load, for all reflection was torture ! To think, merely to think, was to suffer excruciating agony ; yet, never before was *thought* so intrusive—it haunted her in every spot, in all discourse or company ; sleep was no shelter—she never slept but her rack-ing dreams told her——“ she had slain her infant.”

They presented to her view the naked innocent whom she had longed to press to her bosom, while she lifted up her hand against its life. They laid before her the piteous babe whom her eye-balls strained to behold once more, while her feet hurried her away for ever.

Often had Agnes, by the winter's fire, listened to tales of ghosts—of the unceasing sting of a guilty conscience—often had she shuddered at the recital of murders—often had she wept over the story of the innocent put to death ; and stood aghast that the human mind could premeditate the heinous crime of assassination !

From the tenderest passion the most savage impulse may arise: in the deep recesses of fondness, sometimes is implanted the root of cruelty ; and from loving William with unbounded lawless affection, she found herself depraved so as to become

the very object, which could most of all excite her own horror!

Still, at delirious intervals, that passion, which, like a fatal talisman, had enchanted her whole soul, held out the delusive prospect that "William might yet relent"—for, though she had for ever discarded the hope of peace, she could not force herself to think, but that, again blest with his society, she should, at least for the time that he was present with her, taste the sweet cup of "forgetfulness of the past," for which she so ardently thirsted.

"Should he return to me," she thought in those paroxysms of delusion, "I would to *him* unbosom all my guilt; and as a remote, a kind of unwary accomplice in my crime, his sense, his arguments, ever ready in making light of my sins, might afford a respite to my troubled conscience."

While thus she unwittingly thought, and sometimes watched through the night, starting with convulsed rapture at every sound, because it might possibly be the harbinger of him; *he* was busied in carefully looking over marriage articles, fixing the place of residence with his destined bride, or making love to her in formal process. Yet, Agnes, vaunt!—he sometimes thought on thee—he could not witness the folly, the weakness, the vanity, the selfishness of his future wife, without frequently comparing her with thee. When equivocal words, and prevaricating sentences fell from her lips, he remembered with a sigh thy candour—that open sincerity which dwelt upon thy tongue, and seemed to vie with thy undisguised features, to charm the listener even beyond the spectator. While Miss Sedgely eagerly grasped at all the gifts he offered, he could not but call to mind "that Agnes's declining hand was always closed, and her looks forbidding, every time he proffered such disrespectful tokens

of his love." He recollected the softness which beamed from her eyes, the blush on her face at his approach, while he could never discern one glance of tenderness from the niece of Lord Bendham: and the artificial bloom on her cheeks was nearly as disgusting, as the ill-conducted artifice with which she attempted gentleness and love.

But all these impediments were only observed as trials of his fortitude—his prudence could overcome his aversion, and thus he valued himself upon his manly firmness.

'Twas now, that William being rid, by the peevishness of Agnes, most honourably of all future ties to her; and the day of his marriage with Miss Sedgeley being fixed, that Henry, with the rest of the house, learnt, what to them, was news. The first dart of Henry's eye upon his cousin, when, in his presence, he was told of the intended union, caused a reddening on the face of the latter: he always fancied Henry saw his thoughts; and he knew that Henry in return would give him *his*. On the present occasion, no sooner were they alone, and Henry began to utter them, than William charged him—

"Not to dare to proceed; for that, too long accustomed to trifle, the time was come when serious matters could alone employ his time: and when men of approved sense must take place of friends and confidants like him."

Henry replied, "The love, the sincerity of friends I thought, were their best qualities: these I possess."

"But you do not possess knowledge."

"If that be knowledge which has of late estranged you from all who bear you a sincere affection: which imprints every day more and more upon your

features the marks of gloomy inquietude ; am I not happier in my ignorance ?”

“Do not torment me with your ineffectual reasoning.”

“I called at the cottage of poor Agnes the other day,” returned Henry : “her father and mother were taking their homely meal alone ; and when I asked for their daughter, they wept and said—Agnes was not the girl she had been.”

William cast his eyes on the floor.

Henry proceeded—“They said a sickness, which they feared would bring her to the grave, had preyed upon her for some time past. They had procured a doctor : but no remedy was found, and they feared the worst.”

“What worst !” cried William, (now recovered from the effect of the sudden intelligence, and attempting a smile.) “Do they think she will die ? And do you think it will be for love ? We do not hear of these deaths often, Henry.”

“And if *she* die, who will hear of *that* ? No one but those interested to conceal the cause : and thus it is, that dying for love becomes a phenomenon.”

Henry would have pursued the discourse farther ; but William, impatient on all disputes, except where his argument was the better one, retired from the controversy, crying out, “I know my duty, and want no instructor.”

It would be unjust to William, to say he did not feel for this reported illness of Agnes—he felt, during that whole evening, and part of the next morning—but business, pleasures, new occupations, and new schemes of future success, crowded to dissipate all unwelcome reflections ; and he trusted to her youth her health, her animal spirits, and, above all, to the folly of the gossips’ story of *dying for love*, as

a surety for her life, and a safeguard for his conscience.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE child of William and Agnes was secreted, by Rebecca, in a distant chamber belonging to the dreary parsonage, near to which scarcely any part of the family ever went. There she administered to all its wants, visited it every hour of the day, and at intervals during the night, viewed almost with the joy of a mother its health, its promised life—and in a short time found she loved her little gift, better than any thing on earth, except the giver.

Henry called the next morning, and the next, and many succeeding times, in hopes of an opportunity to speak alone with Rebecca, to inquire concerning her charge, and consult when, and how, he could privately relieve her from her trust; as he now meant to procure a nurse for wages. In vain he called or lurked around the house—for near five weeks all the conversation he could obtain with her was in the company of her sisters, who, beginning to observe his preference, his marked attention to her, and the languid half-smothered transport with which she received it, indulged their envy and resentment at the contempt shown to their charms, by watching her steps when he was away, and her every look and whisper while he was present.

For five weeks, then, he was continually thwarted in his expectation of meeting her alone: and at the end of that period, the whole design he had to accomplish by such a meeting was rendered abortive.

Though Rebecca had with strictest caution locked the door of the room in which the child was hid, and

covered each crevice, and every aperture through which sound might more easily proceed ; though she had surrounded the infant's head with pillows, to obstruct all noise from his crying ; yet one unlucky night, the strength of his voice increasing with his age, he was heard by the maid, who slept the nearest to that part of the house.

Not meaning to injure her young mistress, the servant next morning simply related to the family what sounds had struck her ear during the night, and whence they proceeded. At first she was ridiculed " for supposing herself awake when in reality she must be dreaming." But stedfastly persisting in what she had said, and Rebecca's blushes, confusion, and eagerness to prove the maid mistaken, giving suspicion to her charitable sisters, they watched her the very next time she went by stealth to supply the office of a mother : and breaking abruptly on her while feeding and caressing the infant, they instantly concluded it was her *own* ; seized it, and, in spite of her entreaties, carried it down to their father.

That account which Henry had given Rebecca " of his having found the child," and which her own sincerity, joined to the faith she had in his word, made her receive as truth, she now felt would be heard by the present auditors with contempt, even with indignation, as a falsehood. Her affright is easier conceived than described.

Accused, and forced by her sisters along with the child before the curate, his attention to their representation, his crimsoned face, knit brow, and thundering voice, struck with terror her very soul : innocence is not always a protection against fear —sometimes less bold than guilt.

In her father and sisters, she saw, she knew the suspicious, partial, cruel, boisterous natures by

whom she was to be judged ; and timid, gentle, oppressed, she fell trembling on her knees, and could only articulate,

“ Forgive me.”

The curate would not listen to this supplication till she had replied to his question, “ Whose child is this ? ”

She replied, “ I do not know.”

Questioned louder, and with more violence still, “ how the child came there, wherefore her affection for it, and whose it was ; ” she felt the improbability of the truth still more forcibly than before, and dreaded some immediate peril from her father’s rage, should she dare to relate an apparent lie. She paused to think upon a more probable tale than the real one ; and as she hesitated, shook in every limb—while her father exclaimed,

“ I understand the cause of this terror ! it confirms your sisters’ fears, and your own shame. From your infancy I have predicted that some fatal catastrophe would befall you : I never loved you like my other children—I never had the cause : you were always unlike the rest—and I knew your fate would be calamitous ; but the very worst of my forebodings did not come to this—so young, so guilty, and so artful ! Tell me this instant, are you married ? ”

Rebecca answered, “ No.”

The sisters lifted up their hands !

The father continued—“ Vile creature, I thought as much. Still I will know the father of this child.”

She cast up her eyes to Heaven, and firmly vowed she “ did not know herself—nor who the mother was.”

“ This is not to be borne ! ” exclaimed the curate in fury. “ Persist in this, and you shall never see my face again. Both your child and you I’ll turn

out of my house instantly, unless you confess your crime, and own the father."

Curious to know this secret, the sisters went up to Rebecca with seeming kindness, and "conjured her to spare her father still greater grief, and her own and her child's public infamy, by acknowledging herself its mother, and naming the man who had undone her."

Emboldened by this insult from her own sex, Rebecca now began to declare the simple truth. But no sooner had she said, that "the child was presented to her care, by a young man who had found it——" than her sisters burst into laughter, and her father into redoubled rage.

Once more the women offered their advice—"to confess and be forgiven."

Once more the father raved.

Beguiled by solicitations, and terrified by threats, like women formerly accused of witchcraft, and other wretches put to the torture, she thought her present sufferings worse than any that could possibly succeed; and felt inclined to confess a falsehood, at which her virtue shrunk, to obtain a momentary respite from reproach; she felt inclined to take the mother's share of the infant, but was at a loss to whom to give the father's. She thought that Henry had entailed on himself the best right to the charge; but she loved him, and could not bear the thought of accusing him falsely.

While, with agitation in the extreme, she thus deliberated, the proposition again was put,

"Whether she would trust to the mercy of her father by confessing, or draw down his immediate vengeance by denying her guilt?"

She made choice of the former—and with tears and sobs "owned herself the mother of the boy."

But still—"Who is the father?"

Again she shrunk from the question, and fervently implored—"to be spared on that point."

Her petition was rejected with vehemence; and the curate's rage increased till she acknowledged,

"Henry was the father."

"I thought so," exclaimed all her sisters at the same time.

"Villain!" cried the curate. "The dean shall know, before this hour is expired, the baseness of the nephew whom he supports upon charity: he shall know the misery, the grief, the shame he has brought on me, and how unworthy he is of his protection."

"Oh! have mercy on him!" cried Rebecca, as she still knelt to her father: "do not ruin him with his uncle, for he is the best of human beings."

"Ay, ay, we always saw how much she loved him," cried her sisters.

"Wicked, unfortunate girl!" said the clergyman (his rage now subsiding, and tears supplying its place), "you have brought a scandal upon us all: your sisters' reputation will be stamp'd with the colour of yours—my good name will suffer: but that is trivial—your soul is lost to virtue, to religion, to shame——"

"No, *indeed!*" cried Rebecca: "if you will but believe me."

"Do not I believe you? Have not you confessed?"

"You will not pretend to unsay what you have said," cried her eldest sister: "that would be makings things worse."

"Go, go out of my sight!" said her father. "Take your child with you to your chamber, and never let me see either of you again. I do not turn you out of my doors to-day, because I gave you my word I would not, if you revealed your shame—but by to-morrow I will provide some place for your reception,

where neither I, nor any of your relations, shall ever see or hear of you again."

Rebecca made an effort to cling around her father, and once more to declare her innocence: but her sisters interposed, and she was taken, with her reputed son, to the chamber where the curate had sentenced her to remain, till she quitted his house for ever.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE curate, in the disorder of his mind, scarcely felt the ground he trod as he hastened to the dean's house to complain of his wrongs. His name procured him immediate admittance into the library—and the moment the dean appeared, the curate burst into tears. The cause being required of such "very singular marks of grief," Mr. Rymer described himself, "as having been a few moments ago the happiest of parents; but that his peace and that of his whole family had been destroyed by Mr. Henry Norwynne, the dean's nephew."

He now entered into a minute recital of Henry's frequent visits there, and of all which had occurred in his house that morning,—from the suspicion that a child was concealed under his roof, to the confession made by his youngest daughter of her fall from virtue, and of her betrayer's name.

The dean was astonished, shocked, and roused to anger: he vented reproaches and menaces on his nephew; and, "blessing himself in a virtuous son, whose wisdom and counsel were his only solace in every care," sent for William to communicate with him on this unhappy subject.

William came, all obedience, and heard with

marks of amazement and indignation the account of such black villany! In perfect sympathy with Mr. Rymer and his father, he allowed "no punishment could be too great for the seducer of innocence, the selfish invader of a whole family's repose."

Nor did William here speak what he did not think—he merely forgot his own conduct; or if he did recal it to his mind, it was with some fair interpretation in his own behalf; such as self-love ever supplies to those who wish to cheat intruding conscience.

Young Henry being sent for to appear before this triumvirate, he came with a light step and a cheerful face. But, on the charge against him being exhibited, his countenance changed—yet only to the expression of surprise! He boldly asserted his innocence, plainly told the real fact, and with a deportment so perfectly unembarrassed, that nothing but the asseverations of the curate, "that his daughter had confessed the whole," could have rendered the story Henry told suspected; although some of the incidents he related were of no common kind. But Mr. Rymer's charge was an objection to his veracity, too potent to be overcome; and the dean exclaimed, in anger—

"We want not your avowal of your guilt—the mother's evidence is testimony sufficient."

"The virtuous Rebecca is not a mother," said Henry, with firmness.

William here, like Rebecca's sisters, took Henry aside, and warned him not to "add to his offence by denying what was proved against him."

But Henry's spirit was too manly, his affection too sincere, not to vindicate the chastity of her he loved, even at his own peril. He again and again protested "she was virtuous."

"Let her instantly be sent for," said the dean, "and this madman confronted with her." Then

adding, that as he wished every thing might be conducted with secrecy, he would not employ his clerk on the unhappy occasion : he desired William to draw up the form of an oath, which he would administer as soon as she arrived.

A man and horse were immediately dispatched to bring Rebecca : William drew up an affidavit as his father had directed him—in *Rebecca's name solemnly protesting she was a mother, and Henry, the father of her child*—and now, the dean, suppressing till she came, the warmth of his displeasure, spoke thus calmly to Henry :

“ Even supposing that your improbable tale of having found this child, and all your declarations in respect to it, were true, still you would be greatly criminal. What plea can you make for not having immediately revealed the circumstance to me or some other proper person, that the real mother might have been detected and punished for her design of murder ? ”

“ In that, perhaps, I was to blame ; ” returned Henry : “ but whoever the mother was, I pitied her. ”

“ Compassion on such an occasion was ill-placed, ” said the dean.

“ Was I wrong, Sir, to pity the child ? ”

“ No. ”

“ Then how could I feel for *that*, and yet divest myself of all feeling for its mother ? ”

“ Its mother ! ” exclaimed William, in anger : “ She ought to have been immediately pursued, apprehended, and committed to prison. ”

“ It struck me, cousin William, ” replied Henry, “ that the father was more deserving of a prison : the poor woman had abandoned only *one*—the man, in all likelihood, had forsaken *two* pitiable creatures. ”

William was pouring execrations "on the villain, if such there could be," when Rebecca was announced.

Her eyes were half-closed with weeping; deep confusion overspread her face; and her tottering limbs could hardly support her to the awful chamber where the dean, her father, and William sat in judgment, whilst her beloved Henry stood arraigned as a culprit, by her false evidence.

Upon her entrance, her father first addressed her, and said in a stern, threatening, yet feeling tone, "Unhappy girl, answer me before all present—Have you, or have you not, owned yourself a mother?"

She replied, stealing a fearful look at Henry, "I have."

"And have you not," asked the dean, "owned that Henry Norwynne is the father of your child?"

She seemed as if she wished to expostulate—

The curate raised his voice—"Have you, or have you not?"

"I have," she faintly replied.

"Then here," cried the dean to William, "read that paper to her, and take the Bible."

William read the paper, which in her name declared a momentous falsehood: he then held the book in form, while she looked like one distracted—wrung her hands, and was near sinking to the earth.

At the moment when the book was lifted up to her lips to kiss, Henry rushed to her—"Stop," he cried, "Rebecca! do not wound your future peace. I plainly see under what prejudices you have been accused, under what fears you have fallen. But do not be terrified into the commission of a crime which hereafter will distract your delicate conscience. My requesting you of your father for my wife will sa-

tisfy his scruples, prevent your oath—and here I make the demand.”

“He at length confesses! Surprising audacity!—Complicated villany!” exclaimed the dean—then added, “Henry Norwynne, your first guilt is so enormous; your second, in stedfastly denying it, so base; this last conduct so audacious; that from the present hour you must never dare to call me relation, or to consider my house as your home.”

William, in unison with his father, exclaimed, “Indeed, Henry, your actions merit this punishment.”

Henry answered with firmness, “Inflict what punishment you please.”

“With the dean’s permission, then,” said the curate, “you must marry my daughter.”

Henry started—“Do you pronounce that as a punishment? It would be the greatest blessing Providence could bestow. But how are we to live? My uncle is too much offended ever to be my friend again; and in this country, persons of a certain class are so educated, they cannot exist without the assistance, or what is called the patronage, of others: when that is withheld, they steal or starve. Heaven protect Rebecca from such misfortune!—Sir (to the curate), do you but consent to support her only a year or two longer; and in that time I will learn some occupation, that shall raise me to the eminence of maintaining both her and myself without one obligation, or one inconvenience to a single being.”

Rebecca exclaimed, “Oh! you have saved me from such a weight of sin, that my future life would be too happy, passed as your slave.”

“No, my dear Rebecca, return to your father’s house, return to slavery but for a few years more, and the rest of your life I will make free.”

“And can you forgive me?”

"I can love you ; and in that is comprised every thing that is kind."

The curate, who, bating a few passions and a few prejudices, was a man of some worth and feeling, and felt, in the midst of her distress, though the result of supposed crimes, that he loved this neglected daughter better than he had before conceived ; and he now agreed " to take her home for a time, provided she were relieved from the child, and the matter so hushed up, that it might draw no imputation upon the characters of his other daughters."

The dean did not degrade his consequence by consultations of this nature : but, having penetrated (as he imagined) into the very bottom of this intricate story, and issued his mandate against Henry, as a mark that he took no farther concern in the matter, he proudly walked out of the room without uttering another word.

William as proudly and as silently followed.

The curate was inclined to adopt the manners of such great examples : but, self-interest, some affection to Rebecca, and concern for the character of his family, made him wish to talk a little more with Henry ; who now repeated what he had said respecting his marriage with Rebecca, and promised " to come the very next day in secret, and deliver her from the care of the infant, and the suspicion that would attend her nursing it."

"But, above all," said the curate, "procure your uncle's pardon ; for without that, without his protection, or the protection of some other rich man ; to marry, to obey God's ordinance, *increase and multiply*, is to want food for yourself and your offspring."

CHAPTER XXIX.

THOUGH this unfortunate occurrence in the curate's family was, according to his own phrase, "to be hushed up," yet certain persons of his, of the dean's and of Lord Bendham's house, immediately heard and talked of it. Among these, Lady Bendham was most of all shocked and offended: she said she "never could bear to hear Mr. Rymer either pray or preach again; he had not conducted himself with proper dignity either as a clergyman or a father: he should have imitated the dean's example in respect to Henry, and have turned his daughter out of doors."

Lord Bendham was less severe on the seduced, but had no mercy on the seducer—"a vicious youth, without one accomplishment to endear vice." For vice, Lord Bendham thought (with certain philosophers), might be most exquisitely pleasing, in a pleasing garb. "But this youth sinned without elegance, without one particle of wit, or an atom of good breeding."

Lady Clementina would not permit the subject to be mentioned a second time in her hearing—extreme delicacy in woman she knew was bewitching; and the delicacy she displayed on this occasion went so far that she "could not even intercede with the dean to forgive his nephew, because the topic was too gross for her lips to name even in the ear of her husband."

Miss Sedgely, though on the very eve of her bridal day with William, felt so tender a regard for Henry, that often she thought "Rebecca happier in disgrace and poverty, blest with the love of him, than she was likely to be in the possession of friends and fortune with his cousin."

Had Henry been of a nature to suspect others of evil, or had he felt a confidence in his own worth, such a passion as this young woman's would soon have disclosed its existence: but he, regardless of any attractions of Miss Sedgeley, equally supposed he had none in her eyes; and thus, fortunately for the peace of all parties, this prepossession ever remained a secret except to herself.

So little did William conceive that his clownish cousin could rival him in the affections of a woman of fashion, that he even slightly solicited his father "that Henry might not be banished from the house, at least till after the following day, when the great festival of his marriage was to be celebrated."

But the dean refused; and reminded his son, "that he was bound both by his moral and religious character, in the eyes of God, and still more, in the eyes of men, to show lasting resentment of iniquity like his."

William acquiesced, and immediately delivered to his cousin the dean's "wishes for his amendment," and a letter of recommendation procured from Lord Benthham, to introduce him on board a man-of-war; where, he was told, "he might hope to meet with preferment, according to his merit, as a sailor and a gentleman."

Henry pressed William's hand on parting, wished him happy in his marriage, and supplicated, as the only favour he would implore, an interview with his uncle, to thank him for all his former kindness, and to see him for the last time.

William repeated this petition to his father, but with so little energy that the dean did not grant it. He felt himself, he said, compelled to resent that reprobate character in which Henry had appeared; and he feared "lest the remembrance of his last parting from his brother might, on taking a formal

leave of that brother's son, reduce him to some tokens of weakness, that would ill become his dignity and just displeasure."

He sent him his blessing, with money to convey him to the ship, and Henry quitted his uncle's house in a flood of tears, to seek first a new protectress for his little foundling, and then to seek his fortune.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE wedding-day of Mr. William Norwynne with Miss Caroline Sedgeley arrived; and, on that day, the bells of every parish surrounding that in which they lived, joined with their own, in celebration of the blissful union. Flowers were strewed before the new-married pair, and favours and ale made many a heart more gladsome than that of either bridegroom or bride.

Upon this day of ringing and rejoicing, the bells were not muffled, nor was conversation on the subject withheld from the ear of Agnes! She heard like her neighbours; and sitting on the side of her bed in her little chamber, suffered, under the cottage roof, as much affliction as ever visited a palace.

Tyrants, who have embrued their hands in the blood of myriads of their fellow-creatures, can call their murders "religion, justice, attention to the good of mankind." Poor Agnes knew no sophistry to calm *her* sense of guilt: she felt herself a harlot and a murderer; a slighted, a deserted wretch, bereft of all she loved in this world, all she could hope for in the next.

She complained bitterly of illness, nor could the entreaties of her father and mother prevail on her,

to share in the sports of this general holiday. As none of her humble visitors suspected the cause of her more than ordinary indisposition, they endeavoured to divert it with an account of every thing they had seen at church—"what the bride wore; how joyful the bridegroom looked;"—and all the seeming signs of that complete happiness which they conceived was for certain tasted.

Agnes, who, before this event, had at moments suppressed the agonizing sting of self-condemnation, in the faint prospect of her lover one day restored, on this memorable occasion lost every glimpse of hope, and was weighed to the earth with an accumulation of despair.

Where is the degree in which the sinner stops? Unhappy Agnes! the first time you permitted indecorous familiarity from a man who made you no promise, who gave you no hope of becoming his wife, who professed nothing beyond those fervent, though slender, affections which attach the rake to the wanton; the first time you interpreted his kind looks and ardent prayers, into tenderness and constancy; the first time you descended from the character of purity, you rushed imperceptibly on the blackest crimes. The more sincerely you loved, the more you plunged in danger: from one ungoverned passion proceeded a second and a third. In the fervency of affection you yielded up your virtue! In the excess of fear, you stained your conscience by the intended murder of your child! and now, in the violence of grief, you meditate—what?—to put an end to your existence by your own hand!

After casting her thoughts around, anxious to find some little bud of comfort on which to fix her longing eye; she beheld, in the total loss of William, nothing but a wide waste, an extensive plain of anguish. "How am I to be sustained through this

dreary journey of life?" she exclaimed. Upon this question she felt, more poignantly than ever, her loss of innocence: innocence would have been her support, but, in place of this best prop to the afflicted, guilt flashed on her memory every time she flew for aid to reflection.

At length, from horrible rumination, a momentary alleviation came: "But one more step in wickedness," she triumphantly said, "and all my shame, all my sufferings are over." She congratulated herself upon the lucky thought; when, but an instant after, the tears trickled down her face for the sorrow her death, her sinful death, would bring to her poor and beloved parents. She then thought upon the probability of a sigh it might draw from William; and the pride, the pleasure of that little tribute, counterpoised every struggle on the side of life.

As she saw the sun decline, "When you rise again," she thought, "when you peep bright to-morrow morning into this little room to call me up, I shall not be here to open my eyes upon a hateful day—I shall no more regret that you have waked me!—I shall be sound asleep, never to wake again in this wretched world—not even the voice of William would then awake me."

While she found herself resolved, and evening just come on, she hurried out of the house, and hastened to the fatal wood; the scene of her dishonour—the scene of intended murder—and now the meditated scene of suicide.

As she walked along between the close-set trees, she saw, at a little distance, the spot where William first made love to her; and where, at every appointment, he used to wait her coming. She darted her eye away from this place with horror; but, after a few moments of emotion, she walked slowly up to it.

—shed tears, and pressed with her trembling lips that tree, against which he was accustomed to lean while he talked with her. She felt an inclination to make this the spot to die in ; but her preconcerted, and the less frightful death, of leaping into a pool on the other side of the wood, induced her to go onwards.

Presently, she came near the place where *her* child, and *William's*, was exposed to perish. Here, she started with a sense of the most atrocious guilt; and her whole frame shook with the dread of an approaching, an omnipotent Judge, to sentence her for murder.

She halted, appalled, aghast ! undetermined whether to exist longer beneath the pressure of a criminal conscience, or die that very hour, and meet her final condemnation.

She proceeded a few steps farther, and beheld the very ivy-bush close to which her infant lay, when she left him exposed : and now, from this minute recollection, all the mother rising in her soul, she saw, as it were, her babe again in its deserted state ; and, bursting into tears of bitterest contrition and compassion, she cried—

“ As I was merciless to *thee*, my-child, thy father has been pitiless to *me* ! As I abandoned *thee* to die with cold and hunger, he has forsaken, and has driven *me* to die by self-slaughter.”

She now fixed her eager eyes on the distant pond, and walked more nimbly than before, to rid herself of her agonizing sensations.

Just as she had nearly reached the wished-for brink, she heard a footstep, and saw, by the glimmering of a clouded moon, a man approaching. She turned out of her path, for fear her intentions should be guessed at, and opposed ; but still, as she walked another way, her eye was wishfully bent towards the

water that was to obliterate her love and her remorse—obliterate, for ever, William and his child.

It was now, that Henry, who, to prevent scandal, had stolen at that still hour of night to rid the curate of the incumbrance so irksome to him, and take the foundling to a woman whom he had hired for the charge: it was now that Henry came up, with the child of Agnes in his arms, carefully covered all over from the night's dew.

"Agnes, is it you?" cried Henry, at a little distance. "Where are you going thus late?"

"Home, sir," said she, and rushed among the trees.

"Stop, Agnes," he cried: "I want to bid you farewell: to-morrow I am going to leave this part of the country for a long time—So God bless you, Agnes!" Saying this, he stretched out his arm to shake her by the hand.

Her poor heart trusting that his blessing, for want of more potent offerings, might perhaps, at this tremendous crisis, ascend to Heaven in her behalf, she stopt, returned, and put out her hand to take his.

"Softly!" said he: "don't wake my child: this spot has been a place of danger to him: for underneath this very ivy-bush it was that I found him."

"Found what?" cried Agnes, with a voice elevated to a tremulous scream.

"I will not tell you the story," replied Henry; "for no one I have ever yet told of it would believe me."

"I will believe you—I will believe you," she repeated with tones yet more impressive.

"Why, then," said Henry, "only five weeks ago——"

"Ah!" shrieked Agnes.

"What do you mean?" said Henry.

"Go on," she articulated, in the same voice.

"Why, then, as I was passing this very place, I wish I may never speak truth again, if I did not find"—(Here he pulled aside the warm rug in which the infant was wrapt)—"this beautiful child."

"With a cord?—"

"A cord was round its neck."

"'Tis mine—the child is mine—'tis mine—my child—I am the mother and the murderer—I fixed the cord, while the ground shook under me—while flashes of fire darted before my eyes!—while my heart was bursting with despair and horror! But I stopt short—I did not draw the noose—I had a moment of strength, and I ran away. I left him living—he is living now—escaped from my hands—and I am no longer ashamed, but overcome with joy that he is mine! I bless you, my dear, my dear, for saving his life—for giving him to me again—for preserving *my* life, as well as my child's."

Here she took her infant, pressed it to her lips and to her bosom; then bent to the ground, clasped Henry's knees, and wept upon his feet.

He could not for a moment doubt the truth of what she said: her powerful, yet broken accents, her convulsive embraces of the child, even more than her declaration, convinced him she was its mother.

"Good Heaven!" cried Henry, "and this is my cousin William's child!"

"But your cousin does not know it," said she: "I never told him—he was not kind enough to embolden me; therefore do not blame *him* for *my* sin: he did not know of my wicked designs—he did not encourage me——"

"But he forsook you, Agnes."

"He never said he would not. He always told me he could not marry me."

"Did he tell you so at his first private meeting?"

"No."

"Nor at the second?"

"No; nor yet at the third."

"When was it he told you so?"

"I forget the exact time; but I remember it was on that very evening when I confest to him—"

"What?"

"That he had won my heart."

"Why did you confess it?"

"Because he asked me, and said it would make him happy if I would say so."

"Cruel! dishonourable!"

"Nay; do not blame him: he cannot help *not* loving me, no more than I can help *loving* him."

Henry rubbed his eyes.

"Bless me, you weep!—I always heard that you were brought up in a savage country; but I suppose it is a mistake; it was your cousin William."

"Will not you apply to him for the support of your child?" asked Henry.

"If I thought he would not be angry."

"Angry!—I will write to him on the subject, if you will give me leave."

"But do not say it is by my desire. Do not say I wish to trouble him: I would sooner beg, than be a trouble to him."

"Why are you so delicate?"

"It is for my own sake—I wish him not to hate me."

"Then, thus you may secure his respect. I will write to him, and let him know all the circumstances of your case; I will plead for his compassion on his child, but assure him that no conduct of his will ever induce you to declare (except only to me, who knew of your previous acquaintance) who is the father."

To this she consented: but when Henry offered to take from her the infant, and carry him to the nurse he had engaged; to this she would not consent.

"Do you mean, then, to acknowledge him yours?" Henry asked.

"Nothing shall force me to part from him again. I will keep him, and let my neighbours judge of me as they please."

Here Henry caught at a hope he feared to name before. "You will then have no objection," said he, "to clear an unhappy girl to a few friends, with whom her character has suffered by becoming, at my request, his nurse?"

"I will clear any one, so that I do not accuse the father."

"You give me leave, then, in your name, to tell the whole story to some particular friends, my cousin William's part in it alone excepted?"

"I do."

Henry now exclaimed, "God bless you!" with greater fervour than when he spoke it before: and he now hoped the night was nearly gone, that the time might be so much the shorter, before Rebecca should be reinstated in the esteem of her father, and of all those who had misjudged her.

"God bless *you*!" said Agnes, still more fervently, as she walked with unguided steps towards her home; for her eyes never wandered from the precious object which caused her unexpected return.

CHAPTER XXXI.

HENRY rose early in the morning, and flew to the curate's house, with more than even his usual thirst of justice, to clear injured innocence, to redeem from

shame her whom he loved. With eager haste he told—that he had found the mother, whose fall from virtue Rebecca, overcome by confusion and threats, had taken on herself.

Rebecca rejoiced; but her sisters shook their heads; and even the father seemed to doubt.

Confident in the truth of his story, Henry persisted so boldly in his affirmations, that if Mr. Rymer did not entirely believe what he said, he secretly hoped that the dean and other people might; therefore he began to imagine he could possibly cast from *his* family the present stigma, whether or no it belonged to any other.

No sooner was Henry gone, than Mr. Rymer waited on the dean to report what he had heard; and he frankly attributed his daughter's false confession to the compulsive methods he had adopted in charging her with the offence. Upon this statement, Henry's love to her was also a solution of his seemingly inconsistent conduct on that singular occasion.

The dean immediately said, "I will put the matter beyond all doubt: for I will this moment send for the present reputed mother; and if she acknowledges the child, I will instantly commit her to prison for the attempt of putting it to death."

The curate applauded the dean's sagacity: a warrant was issued; and Agnes brought prisoner before the grandfather of her child.

She appeared astonished at the peril in which she found herself. Confused, also, with a thousand inexpressible sensations which the dean's presence inspired, she seemed to prevaricate in all she uttered.—Accused of this prevarication, she was still more disconcerted; said, and unsaid; confessed herself the mother of the infant, but declared she did not know, then owned she *did* know, the name of the

man who had undone her, but would never utter it. At length, she cast herself on her knees before the father of her betrayer, and supplicated "he would not punish her with severity, as she most penitently confessed her fault, so far as it related to herself."

While Mr. and Mrs. Norwynne, just entered on the honey-moon, were sitting side by side enjoying with peace and with honour conjugal society; poor Agnes, threatened, reviled, and sinking to the dust, was hearing from the mouth of William's father, the enormity of those crimes to which his son had been accessory. She saw the mittimus written that was to convey her into a prison—saw herself delivered once more into the hands of constables, before her resolution left her, of concealing the name of William in her story. She now, overcome with affright, and thinking she should expose him still more in a public court, if hereafter on her trial she should be obliged to name him—she now humbly asked the dean to hear a few words she had to say in private, where she promised she "would speak nothing but the truth."

This was impossible, he said—"No private confessions before a magistrate! All must be done openly."

She urged again and again the same request: it was denied more peremptorily than at first. On which she said—

"Then, sir, forgive me, since you force me to it, if I speak before Mr. Rymer and these men, what I would for ever have kept a secret if I could. One of your family is my child's father."

"Any of my servants?" cried the dean.

"No."

"My nephew?"

"No; one who is nearer still."

"Come this way," said the dean; "*I will speak to you in private.*"

It was not that the dean, as a magistrate, distributed partial decrees of pretended justice—he was rigidly faithful to his trust: he would not inflict punishment on the innocent, nor let the guilty escape; but in all particulars of refined or coarse treatment, he would alleviate or aggravate according to the rank of the offender. He could not feel that a secret was of equal importance to a poor as to a rich person; and while Agnes gave no intimation but that her delicacy rose from fears for herself, she did not so forcibly impress him with an opinion, that it was a case which had weighty cause for a private conference, as when she boldly said, "a part of *his* family, very near to him, was concerned in her tale."

The final result of their conversation, in an adjoining room, was—a charge from the dean, in the words of Mr. Rymer, "to hush the affair up;" and his promise that the infant should be immediately taken from her, and that "she should have no more trouble with it."

"I have no trouble with it," replied Agnes: "my child is now all my comfort; and I cannot part from it."

"Why, you inconsistent woman, did you not attempt to murder it?"

"That was before I had nursed it."

"'Tis necessary you should give it up: it must be sent some miles away; and then the whole circumstance will be soon forgotten."

"*I shall never forget it.*"

"No matter; you must give up the child. Do not some of our first women of quality part with their children?"

"Women of quality have other things to love—I have nothing else."

"And would you occasion my son, and his new-made bride, the shame and the uneasiness——"

Here Agnes burst into a flood of tears; and being angrily asked by the dean "why she blabbered so"——

"I have had shame and uneasiness," she replied, wringing her hands.

"And you deserve them: they are the sure attendants of crimes such as yours. If you allured and entrapped a young man like my son——"

"I am the youngest by five years," said Agnes.

"Well, well, repent," returned the dean; "repent, and resign your child. Repent, and you may yet marry an honest man who knows nothing of the matter."

"And repent too?" asked Agnes.

Not the insufferable ignorance of young Henry, when he first came to England, was more vexatious or provoking to the dean than the rustic simplicity of poor Agnes's uncultured replies. He at last, in an offended and determined manner, told her——

"That if she would resign the child, and keep the father's name a secret, not only the child should be taken care of, but she herself might, perhaps, receive some favours: but if she persisted in her imprudent folly, she must expect no consideration on her own account; nor should she be allowed, for the maintenance of the boy, a sixpence beyond the stated sum for a poor man's unlawful offspring."—— Agnes, resolving not to be separated from her infant, bowed resignation to this last decree; and, terrified at the loud words and angry looks of the dean, after being regularly discharged, stole to her home; where the smiles of her infant, and the caresses she lavished on it, repaid her for the sorrows she had just suffered for its sake.

Let it here be observed, that the dean, on suffering Agnes to depart without putting in force the

law against her as he had threatened, did nothing, as it were, *behind the curtain*. He openly and candidly owned, on his return to Mr. Rymer, his clerk, and the two constables who were attending, "that an affair of some little gallantry, in which he was extremely sorry to say his son was rather too nearly involved, required, in consideration of his recent marriage, and an excellent young woman's (his bride's) happiness, that what had occurred should not be publicly talked of: therefore he had thought proper only to reprimand the hussey, and send her about her business."

The curate assured the dean, "that upon this, and upon all other occasions, which should, would, or *could* occur, he owed to his judgment, as his superior, implicit obedience."

The clerk and the two constables most properly said, "his honour was a gentleman, and of course must know better how to act than they."

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE pleasure of a mother which Agnes experienced, did not make her insensible to the sorrow of a daughter.

Her parents had received the stranger child, along with a fabricated tale she told "of its appertaining to another," without the smallest suspicion; but, by the secret diligence of the curate, and the nimble tongues of his elder daughters, the report of all that had passed on the subject of this unfortunate infant, soon circulated through the village; and Agnes in a few weeks, had seen her parents pine away in grief and shame at her loss of virtue.

She perceived the neighbours avoid, or openly

sneer at *her*—but that was little, she saw them slight her aged father and mother upon her account : and she now took the resolution, rather to perish for want in another part of the country, than live where she was known, and so entail an infamy upon the few who loved her. She slightly hoped, too, that by disappearing from the town and neighbourhood, some little reward might be allowed her, for her banishment, by the dean's family. In that she was deceived. No sooner was she gone, indeed, than her guilt was forgotten : but with her guilt her wants. The dean and his family rejoiced at her and her child's departure : but as this mode she had chosen chanced to be no specified condition in the terms proposed to her, they did not think they were bound to pay her for it ; and while she was too fearful and bashful to solicit the dean, and too proud (forlorn as she was) to supplicate his son, they both concluded she “ wanted for nothing ; ” for to be poor, and too delicate to complain, they deemed incompatible.

To heighten the sense of her degraded, friendless situation, she knew that Henry had not been unmindful of his promise to her, but that he had applied to his cousin in her and his child's behalf ; for he had acquainted her that William's answer was —“ all obligations on *his* part were now undertaken by his father ; for that, Agnes having chosen (in a fit of malignity upon his marriage) to apprise the dean of their former intercourse, such conduct had for ever cancelled all attention due from him to her, or to her child, beyond what its bare maintenance exacted.”

In vain had Henry explained to him, by a second application, the predicament in which poor Agnes was involved, before she consented to reveal her secret to his father ; William was happy in an excuse

to rid himself of a burthen, and he seemed to believe, what he wished to be true—that she had forfeited all claim to his farther notice.

Henry informed her of this unkind reception of his efforts in her favour, in as gentle terms as possible, for she excited his deepest compassion. Perhaps our *own* misfortunes are the cause of our pity for others, even more than *their* ills; and Henry's present sorrows had softened his heart to peculiar sympathy in woe. He had unhappily found, that the ardour which had hurried him to vindicate the reputation of Rebecca, was likely to deprive him of the blessing, of her ever becoming his wife: for the dean, chagrined that his son was at length proved an offender instead of his nephew, submitted to the temptation of punishing the latter, while he forgave the former. He sent for Henry, and having coldly congratulated him on his and Rebecca's innocence, represented to him the impropriety of marrying the daughter of a poor curate, and laid his commands on him, "never to harbour such an intention more." Henry found this restriction so severe that he would not promise obedience; but on his next attempt to visit Rebecca, he met a positive repulse from her father, who signified to him, "that the dean had forbidden him to permit their farther acquaintance;" and the curate declared, "that, for his own part, he had no will, judgment, or faculties; but that he submitted in all things to the superior clergy."

At the very time young Henry had received the proposal from Mr. Rymer, of his immediate union with his daughter, and the dean had made no objection, Henry waved the happiness for the time present, and had given a reason why he wished it postponed. The reason he then gave had its weight; but he had another concealed, of yet more import. —Much as he loved, and looked forward with rap-

ture to that time when every morning, every evening, and all the day, he should have the delight of Rebecca's society; still there was one other wish nearer his heart than this one desire which for years had been foremost in his thoughts, and which not even love could eradicate. He longed, he pined to know what fate had befallen his father. Provided he were living, he could conceive no joy so great as that of seeing him! If he were dead, he was anxious to pay the tribute of filial piety he owed, by satisfying his affectionate curiosity in every circumstance of the sad event.

While a boy, he had frequently expressed these sentiments to both his uncle and his cousin: sometimes they apprised him of the total improbability of accomplishing his wishes: at other times, when they saw the disappointment weigh heavy on his mind, they bade him "wait till he was a man, before he could hope to put his designs in execution." He did wait. But on the very day he arrived at the age of twenty-one, he made a vow—"that to gain intelligence of his father should be the first important act of his free will."

Previously to this time he had made all the inquiries possible, whether any new adventure to that part of Africa in which he was bred was likely to be undertaken. Of this there appeared to be no prospect, till the intended expedition to Sierra Leone was announced, and which favoured his hope of being able to procure a passage, among those adventurers, so near to the island on which his father was (or had been) prisoner, as to obtain an opportunity of visiting it by stealth.

Fearing contention, or the being dissuaded from his plans if he communicated them, he not only formed them in private, but he kept them secretly; and, his imagination filled with the kindness, the

tenderness, the excess of fondness he had experienced from his father, beyond any other person in the world, he had thought with delight on the separation from all his other kindred, to pay his duty to him, or to his revered memory. Of late, indeed, there had been an object introduced to his acquaintance, from whom it was bitter to part ; but his designs had been planned and firmly fixed before he knew Rebecca ; nor could he have tasted contentment even with her, at the expense of his piety to his father.

In the last interview he had with the dean, Henry—perceiving that his disposition towards him was not less harsh than when a few days before he had ordered him on board a vessel—found this the proper time to declare his intentions of accompanying the fleet to Sierra Leone. His uncle expressed surprise ; but immediately give him a sum of money in addition to that he had sent him before, and as much as he thought might defray his expenses ; and as he gave it, by his willingness, his look, and his accent, he seemed to say, “ I foresee this is the last you will ever require.”

Young William, though a very dutiful son, was amazed when he heard of Henry’s project, as “ the serious and settled resolution of a man.”

Lady Clementina, Lord and Lady Bendham, and twenty others, “ wished him a successful voyage,” and thought no more about him.

It was for Rebecca alone, to feel the loss of Henry—it was for a mind like hers alone, to know his worth—nor did this last proof of it, the quitting her for one who claimed by every tie a preference, lessen him in her esteem. When, by a message from him, she became acquainted with his design, much as it interfered with her happiness, she valued him the more for this observance of his duty—the more

regretted his loss, and the more anxiously prayed for his return—a return which he, in the following letter, written just before his departure, taught her to hope for with augmented impatience.

“ MY DEAR REBECCA,

“ I do not tell you I am sorry to part from you—you know I am—and you know all I have suffered, since your father denied me permission to see you.

“ But perhaps you do not know the hopes I enjoy, and which bestow on me a degree of peace ; and those I am eager to tell you.

“ I hope, Rebecca, to see you again : I hope to return to England, and overcome every obstacle to our marriage ; and then, in whatever station we are placed, I shall consider myself as happy as it is possible to be in this world. I feel a conviction that you would be happy also.

“ Some persons, I know, estimate happiness by fine houses, gardens, and parks ; others, by pictures, horses, money, and various things wholly remote from their own species ; but when I wish to ascertain the real felicity of any rational man, I always inquire *whom he has to love*. If I find he has nobody, or does not love those he has, even in the midst of all his profusion of finery and grandeur, I pronounce him a being in deep adversity. In loving you, I am happier than my cousin William ; even though I am obliged to leave you for a time.

“ Do not be afraid you should grow old before I return—age can never alter you in my regard. It is your gentle nature, your unaffected manners, your easy cheerfulness, your clear understanding, the sincerity of all your words and actions, which have gained my heart ; and while you preserve charms like these, you will be dearer to me with white hairs and a wrinkled face, than any of your sex, who, not

possessing all these qualities, possess the form and features of perfect beauty.

"You will esteem me, too, I trust, though I should return on crutches with my poor father, whom I may be obliged to maintain by daily labour.

"I shall employ all my time, during my absence, in the study of some art which may enable me to support you both, provided Heaven will bestow two such blessings on me. In the cheering thought that it will be so, and in that only, I have the courage, my dear, dear Rebecca, to say to you

"Farewell!

"H. NORWYNNE."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

BEFORE Henry could receive a reply to his letter, the fleet in which he sailed put to sea.

By his absence, not only Rebecca was deprived of the friend she loved, but poor Agnes lost a kind and compassionate adviser. The loss of her parents, too, she had to mourn; for they both sickened, and both died, in a short time after: and now wholly friendless in her little exile, where she could only hope for toleration, not being known, she was contending with suspicion, rebuffs, disappointments, and various other ills, which might have made the most rigorous of her Anfield persecutors feel compassion for her, could they have witnessed the throbs of her heart, and all the deep wounds there imprinted.

Still, there are few persons whom Providence afflicts beyond the limits of *all* consolation; few cast so low, as not to feel pride on *certain* occasions; and Agnes felt a comfort and a dignity in the thought—that she had both a mind and a body capable of sus-

tainiug every hardship, which her destiny might inflict, rather than submit to the disgrace of soliciting William's charity a second time.

This determination was put to a variety of trials. In vain she offered herself to the strangers of the village, in which she was accidentally cast, as a servant—her child, her dejected looks, her broken sentences, a wildness in her eye, a kind of bold despair which at times overspread her features, her imperfect story, who and what she was, prejudiced all those to whom she applied; and, after thus travelling to several small towns and hamlets, the only employer she could obtain was a farmer; and the only employment, to tend and feed his cattle, while his men were in the harvest, tilling the ground, or at some other labour which required, at the time, peculiar expedition.

Though Agnes was born of péasants, yet, having been the only child of industrious parents, she had been nursed with a tenderness and delicacy ill suited to her present occupation: but she endured it with patience; and the most laborious part would have seemed light, could she have dismissed the reflection—what it was that had reduced her to such a state.

Soon her tender hands became hard and rough, her fair skin burnt and yellow; so that when, on a Sunday, she has looked in the glass, she has started back as if it were some other face she saw instead of her own. But this loss of beauty gave her no regret—while William did not see her, it was indifferent to her, whether she were beautiful or hideous. On the features of her child only, she now looked with joy: there, she fancied she saw William at every glance—and, in the fond imagination, felt, at times, every happiness short of seeing him.

By herding with the brute creation, she and her child were allowed to live together; and this was

a state she preferred to the society of human creatures, who would have separated her from what she loved so tenderly. Anxious to retain a service in which she possessed such a blessing, care and attention to her humble office caused her master to prolong her stay through all the winter—then, during the spring, she tended his yearning sheep—in the summer, watched them as they grazed—and thus season after season passed, till her young son could afford her assistance in her daily work.

He now could charm her with his conversation as well as with his looks—a thousand times, in the transports of parental love, she has pressed him to her bosom, and thought, with an agony of horror, upon her criminal, her mad intent to destroy what was now so dear, so necessary to her existence.

Still the boy grew up more and more like his father. In one resemblance alone he failed—he loved Agnes with an affection totally distinct from the pitiful and childish gratification of his own self-love:—he never would quit her side for all the tempting offers of toys or money—never would eat of rarities given to him, till Agnes took a part—never crossed her will, however contradictory to his own—never saw her smile that he did not laugh—nor did she ever weep, but he wept too.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

FROM the mean subject of oxen, sheep, and peasants we return to personages; *i. e.* persons of rank and fortune. The bishop, who was introduced in the foregoing pages, but who has occupied a very small space there, is now mentioned again, merely that the reader may know he is at present in the same state

as his writings—dying ; and that his friend, the dean, is talked of as the most likely successor to his dignified office.

The dean, most assuredly, had a strong friendship for the bishop, and now, most assuredly, wished him to recover ; and yet, when he reflected on the success of his pamphlet a few years past, and of many which he had written since on the very same subject, he could not but think “ that he had more righteous pretensions to fill the vacant seat of his much beloved and reverend friend (should fate ordain it to be vacated) than any other man : ” and he knew that it would not take one moment from that friend’s remaining life, should he exert himself, with all due management, to obtain the elevated station where ~~he~~ should be no more.

In presupposing the death of a friend, the dean, like many other virtuous men, “ always supposed him going to a better place.” With perfect resignation, therefore, he waited whatever change might happen to the bishop ; ready to receive him with open arms if he recovered, or equally ready, in case of his dissolution, to receive his dignities.

Lady Clementina displayed her sensibility and feeling for the sick prelate, by the extravagance of hysteric fits ; except at those times when she talked seriously with her husband upon the injustice which she thought would be done to him, and to his many pamphlets and sermons, if he did not immediately rise to the episcopal honour.

“ Surely, dean,” said she, “ should you be disappointed upon this occasion, you will write no more books for the good of your country ? ”

“ Yes, I will,” he replied ; “ but the next book I write for the good of my country shall be very different, nay the very reverse of those I have already written.”

"How, dean! would you show yourself changed?"

"No, but I will show that my country is changed."

"What! since you produced your last work; only six weeks ago!"

"Great changes may occur in six days," replied the dean, with a threatening accent: "and if I find things *have* taken a new and improper turn, I will be the first to expose it."

"But before you act in this manner, my dear, surely you will wait ——"

"I will wait till the see is disposed of to another," said he.

He did wait: the bishop died. The dean was promoted to the see of ***, and wrote a folio on the prosperity of our happy country.

CHAPTER XXXV.

WHILE the bishop and his son were sailing before prosperous gales on the ocean of life, young Henry was contending with adverse winds, and many other perils, on the watery ocean; yet still, his distresses and dangers were less than those which Agnes had to encounter upon land. The sea threatens an untimely death; the shore menaces calamities from which death is a refuge.

The afflictions she had already experienced, could just admit of aggravation: the addition occurred.

Had the good farmer, who made her the companion of his flocks and herds, lived till now, till now she might have been secure from the annoyance of human kind; but, thrown once more upon society, she was unfit to sustain the conflict of decorum against depravity. Her master, her patron, her

preserver, was dead ; and hardly as she had earned the pittance she received from him, she found, that it surpassed her power to obtain the like again. Her doubtful character, her capacious mind, her unmethodical manners, were still badly suited to the nice precision of a country housewife ; and as the prudent mistress of a family sneered at her pretensions, she, in her turn, scorned the narrow-minded mistress of a family.

In her inquiries how to gain her bread free from the cutting reproaches of discretion, she was informed, “ that London was the only private corner, where guilt could be secreted undisturbed ; and the only public place where, in open day, it might triumphantly stalk, attended by a train of audacious admirers.”

There was a charm to the ear of Agnes, in the name of London, which thrilled through her soul. William lived in London ; and she thought, that, while she retired to some dark cellar with her offences, he probably would ride in state with his, and she at humble distance might sometimes catch a glance of him.

As difficult as to eradicate insanity from a mind once possessed, so difficult it is to erase from the lover's breast the deep impression of a *real* affection. Coercion may prevail for a short interval, still love will rage again. Not all the ignominy which Agnes experienced in the place where she now was without a home—not the hunger which she at times suffered, and even at times saw her child endure—not every inducement for going to London, or motive for quitting her present desolate station, had the weight to affect her choice so much as—in London, she should live nearer William ; in the present spot she could never hope to see him again ; but there she might chance to pass

him in the streets ; she might pass his house every day unobserved—might inquire about him of his inferior neighbours, who would be unsuspicious of the cause of her curiosity. For these gratifications, she should imbibe new fortitude ; for these she could bear all hardships which London threatened ; and for these, she at length undertook a three weeks' journey to that perilous town on foot, cheering, as she walked along, her innocent and wearied companion.

William !—in your luxurious dwelling ! possessed of coffers filled with gold ! relations, friends, clients, joyful around you ! delicious viands and rich wines upon your sumptuous board ! voluptuousness displayed in every apartment of your habitation !—contemplate, for a moment, Agnes, your first love, with her son, your first and only child, walking through frost and snow to London, with a foreboding fear on the mother—that, when arrived, they both may perish for the want of a friend.

But no sooner did Agnes find herself within the smoke of the metropolis, than the old charm was renewed ; and scarcely had she refreshed her child at the poor inn at which she stopped, than she inquired—how far it was to that part of the town where William, she knew, resided ?

She received for answer, “ about two miles.”

Upon this information, she thought that she would keep in reserve, till some new sorrow befel her, the consolation of passing his door (perchance of seeing him), which must ever be an alleviation of her grief. It was not long before she had occasion for more substantial comfort. She soon found she was not likely to obtain a service here, more than in the country. Some objected that she could not make caps and gowns ; some, that she could not preserve and pickle ; some, that she was too young ;

some, that she was too pretty ; and all declined accepting her, till at last a citizen's wife, on condition of her receiving but half the wages usually given, took her as a servant of all work.

In romances, and in some plays, there are scenes of dark and unwholesome mines, wherein the labourer works, during the brightest day, by the aid of artificial light. There are in London kitchens equally dismal, though not quite so much exposed to damp and noxious vapours. In one of these, under ground, hidden from the cheerful light of the sun, poor Agnes was doomed to toil from morning till night, subjected to the command of a dissatisfied mistress ; who, not estimating as she ought the misery incurred by serving her, constantly threatened her servants "with a dismissal ;" at which the unthinking wretches would tremble merely from the sound of the words ;—for, to have reflected—to have considered what their purport was—"to be released from a dungeon, relieved from continual upbraidings, and vile drudgery," must have been a subject of rejoicing ; and yet, because these good tidings were delivered as a menace, custom had made the hearer fearful of the consequence. So, death being described to children as a disaster, even poverty and shame will start from it with affright ; whereas, had it been pictured with its benign aspect, it would have been feared but by few, and many, many would welcome it with gladness.

All the care of Agnes to please, her fear of offending, her toilsome days, her patience, her submission, could not prevail on her she served to retain her one hour after, by chance, she had heard "that she was the mother of a child ; that she wished it should be kept a secret ; and that she stole out now and then to visit him."

Agnes, with swimming eyes and an almost break-

ing heart, left a place—where, to have lived one hour, would have plunged any fine lady in the deepest grief.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

AGNES was driven from service to service—her deficiency in the knowledge of a mere drudge, or her lost character, pursued her wherever she went :—at length, becoming wholly destitute, she gladly accepted a place where the latter misfortune was not of the least impediment.

In one of those habitations, where continual misery is dressed in continual smiles ; where extreme of poverty is concealed by extreme of finery ; where wine dispenses mirth only by dispensing forgetfulness ; and where female beauty is so cheap, so complying, that, while it inveigles, it disgusts the man of pleasure : in one of those houses, to attend upon its wretched inhabitants, Agnes was hired. Her feelings of rectitude submitted to those of hunger ; her principles of virtue (which the loss of virtue had not destroyed) received a shock when she engaged to be the abettor of vice, from which her delicacy, morality, and religion shrunk ; but persons of honour and of reputation would not employ her : was she then to perish ? That perhaps was easy to resolve ; but she had a child to leave behind ! a child, from whom to part for a day was a torment. Yet, before she submitted to a situation which filled her mind with a kind of loathing horror, often she paced up and down the street in which William lived, looked wistfully at his house, and sometimes, lost to all her finer feelings of independent pride, thought of sending a short petition to him ; but, at the idea

of a repulse, and of that frowning brow which she knew William *could* dart on her petitions, she preferred death, or the most degrading life, to the trial.

It was long since, that misfortune and dishonour had made her callous to the good or ill opinion of all the world, except *his*; and the fear of drawing upon her his increased contempt was still, at the crisis of applying, so powerful, that she found she dared not hazard a reproof from him even in the person of his father; whose rigour she had already more than once experienced, in the frequent harsh messages conveyed to her with the poor stipend for her boy.

Awed by the rigid and pious character of the new bishop, the growing reputation and rising honours of his son, she mistook the appearance of moral excellence, for moral excellence itself, and felt her own unworthiness even to become the supplicant of those great men.

Day after day she watched those parts of the town through which William's chariot was accustomed to drive: but to see the *carriage* was all to which she aspired—a feeling, not to be described, forced her to cast her eyes upon the earth as it drew near to her; and when it had passed, she beat her breast and wept, that she had not seen *him*.

Impressed with the superiority of others, and her own abject and disgustful state, she cried, "Let me herd with those who won't despise me—let me only see faces whereon I can look without confusion and terror—let me associate with wretches like myself, rather than force my shame before those who are so good, they can but scorn and hate me."

With a mind thus languishing for sympathy in disgrace, she entered a servant in the house just now described. There, disregarding the fatal proverb against "*evil communications*," she had not the firm-

ness to be an exception to the general rule. That pliant disposition, which had yielded to the licentious love of William, stooped to still baser prostitution in company still more depraved.


At first she shuddered at those practices she saw, at those conversations she heard ; and blest herself that poverty, not inclination, had caused her to be a witness of such profligacy, and had condemned her in this vile abode to be a servant, rather than in the lower rank of mistress. Use softened those horrors every day—at length self-defence, the fear of ridicule, and the hope of favour, induced her to adopt that very conduct from which her heart revolted.

In her sorrowful countenance, and fading charms, there yet remained attraction for many visitors ; and she now submitted to the mercenary profanations of love—more odious, as her mind had been subdued by its most captivating, most endearing joys.

While incessant regret whispered to her “ that she ought to have endured every calumny rather than this,” she thus questioned her nice sense of wrong—“ Why, why respect myself, since no other respects me ? Why set a value on my own feelings, when no one else does ?”

Degraded in her own judgment, she doubted her own understanding when it sometimes told her she had deserved better treatment—for she felt herself a fool in comparison with her learned seducer and the rest who despised her. “ And why,” she continued, “ should I ungratefully persist to condemn women, who alone are so kind as to accept me for a companion ? Why refuse conformity to their customs, since none of my sex besides will admit me to their society a partaker of virtuous habits ?”

In speculation, these arguments appeared reasonable, and she pursued their dictates : but in the practice of the life in which she plunged, she proved the



fallacy of the system ; and at times tore her hair with frantic sorrow—that she had not continued in the mid-way of guilt, and so preserved some portion of self-approbation, to recompense her, in a small degree, for the total loss of the esteem of all the reputable world.

But she had gone too far to recede. Could she now have recalled her innocence, even that remnant she brought with her to London, experience would have taught her to have given up her child, lived apart from him, and once more with the brute creation, rather than to have mingled with her present society. Now, alas ! the time for flying was past—all prudent choice was over—even all reflection was gone for ever—or only admitted on compulsion, when it imperiously forced its way amidst the scenes of tumultuous mirth, or licentious passion, of distracted riot, shameless effrontery, and wild intoxication—when it *would* force its way—even through the walls of a brothel.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Is there a reader so little experienced in the human heart, so forgetful of his own, as not to feel the possibility of the following fact ?

A series of uncommon calamities had been for many years the lot of the elder Henry—a succession of prosperous events had fallen to the share of his brother William. The one was the envy, while the other had the compassion, of all who thought about them. For the last twenty years, William had lived in affluence bordering upon splendour, his friends, his fame, his fortune daily increasing : while Henry throughout that very period, had, by degrees, lost

all he loved on earth, and was now existing apart from civilised society—and yet, during those twenty years, where William knew one happy moment, Henry tasted hundreds.

That the state of the mind, and not outward circumstances, is the nice point on which happiness depends, is but a trite remark: but that intellectual power should have the force to render a man discontented in extraordinary prosperity such as that of the present bishop, or contented in his brother's extreme of adversity, requires illustration.

The first great affliction to Henry was his brother's ingratitude; but reasoning on the frailty of man's nature, and the force of man's temptations, he found excuses for William, which made him support the treatment he had received with more tranquillity than William's proud mind supported his brother's marriage. Henry's indulgent disposition made him less angry with William, than William was with him.

The next affliction Henry suffered was the loss of his beloved wife. That was a grief which time and change of objects gradually alleviated; while William's wife was to him a permanent grief: her puerile mind, her talking vanity, her affected virtues, soured his domestic comfort; and, in time, he had suffered more painful moments from her society, than his brother had experienced, even from the death of her he loved.

In their children, indeed, William was the happier—his son was a pride and pleasure to him, while Henry never thought upon *his* without lamenting his loss with bitterest anguish. But if the elder brother had in one instance the advantage, still Henry had a resource to overbalance this article. Henry, as he lay imprisoned in his dungeon, and when, his punishment being remitted, he was again allowed to

wander and seek his subsistence where he would, —in all his tedious walks and solitary resting-places, during all his lonely days and mournful nights, had *this resource* to console him :

“ I never did an injury to any one ; never was harsh, severe, unkind, deceitful : I did not merely confine myself to do my neighbour no harm ; I strove to do him service.”

This was the resource that cheered his sinking heart amidst gloomy deserts and a barbarous people, lulled him to peaceful slumber in the hut of a savage hunter, and in the hearing of the lion's roar ; at times impressed him with a sense of happiness ; and made him contemplate with a longing hope, the retribution of a future world.

The bishop, with all his comforts, had no comfort like this : he had *his* solitary reflections too, but they were of a tendency the reverse of these. “ I used my brother ill,” was a secret thought of most powerful influence : it kept him waking upon his safe and commodious bed ; was sure to recur with every misfortune by which he was threatened, to make his fears still stronger ; and came with invidious stabs, upon every successful event, to take from him a part of his joy. In a word, it was *conscience* which made Henry's years pass happier than William's.

But though, comparatively with his brother, William was the less happy man, yet his self-reproach was not of such magnitude, for an offence of that atrocious nature, as to banish from his breast a certain degree of happiness, a sensibility to the smiles of fortune : nor was Henry's self-acquittal [of such exquisite kind as to chase away the feeling of his desolate condition.

As he fished or hunted for his daily dinner, many a time in full view of his prey, a sudden burst of sorrow at his fate, a sudden longing for some dear

associate, for some friend to share his thoughts, for some kind shoulder on which to lean his head, for some companion to partake of his repast, would make him instantaneously desist from his pursuit, cast him on the ground in a fit of anguish, till a shower of tears, and his *conscience*, came to his relief.

It was after an exile of more than twenty-three years—when, on one sultry morning, after pleasant dreams during the night, Henry had waked with more than usual perception of his misery—that, sitting upon the beach, his wishes and his looks all bent on the sea towards his native land, he thought he saw a sail swelling before an unexpected breeze.

“Sure I am dreaming still!” he cried. “This is the very vessel I saw last night in my sleep!—Oh! what cruel mockery, that my eyes should so deceive me!”

Yet, though he doubted, he leaped upon his feet in transport!—held up his hands, stretched at their length, in a kind of ecstatic joy!—and as the glorious sight approached, was near rushing into the sea to hail and meet it.

For a while hope and fear kept him in a state bordering on distraction.

Now he saw the ship making for the shore, and tears flowed for the grateful prospect. Now it made for another point, and he vented shrieks and groans from the disappointment.

It was at those moments, while hope and fear thus possessed him, that the horrors of his abode appeared more than ever frightful!—Inevitable afflictions must be borne; but that calamity which admits the expectation of relief, and then denies it, is insupportable.

After a few minutes passed in dreadful uncertainty which enhanced the wished-for happiness, the ship evidently drew near the land—a boat was launched

from her—and while Henry, now upon his knees, wept, and prayed fervently for the event ; a youth sprang from the barge on the strand, rushed towards him, and falling on his neck, then at his feet, exclaimed, “ My father ! oh ! my father ! ”

William ! dean ! bishop ! what are your honours, what your riches, what all your possessions, compared to the happiness, the transport bestowed by this one sentence, on your poor brother Henry ?

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE crosses at land, and the perilous events at sea, had made it now two years, since young Henry first took the vow of a man no longer dependent on the will of another, to seek his father. His fatigues, his dangers were well recompensed. Instead of weeping over a silent grave, he had the inexpressible joy to receive a parent's blessing for his labours. Yet, the elder Henry, though living, was so changed in person, that his son would scarcely have known him in any other than the favourite spot, which the younger (keeping in memory every incident of his former life) knew his father had always chosen for his morning contemplations ; and where, previously to his coming to England, he had many a time kept him company. It was to that particular corner of the island that the captain of the ship had generously ordered they should steer, out of the general route, to gratify the filial tenderness he expressed. But scarcely had the interview between the father and the son taken place, than a band of natives, whom the appearance of the vessel had called from the woods and hills, came to attack the invaders. The elder Henry had no friend with whom he wished to

shake hands at his departure ; the old Negro servant who had assisted in young Henry's escape was dead ; and he experienced the excessive joy of bidding adieu to the place, without one regret for all he left behind.

On the night of that day, whose morning had been marked by peculiar sadness at the looming prospect of many exiled years to come, he slept on board an English vessel, with Englishmen his companions, and his son, his beloved son—who was still more dear to him for that mind which had planned and executed his rescue—this son, his attentive servant, and most affectionate friend.

Though many a year passed, and many a rough encounter was destined to the lot of the two Henrys before they saw the shores of Europe, yet to them, to live or to die together was happiness enough : even young Henry for a time asked for no greater blessing—but, the first glow of filial ardour over, he called to mind, “ Rebecca lived in England ; ” and every exertion which love, founded on the highest reverence and esteem, could dictate, he employed to expedite a voyage, the end of which would be crowned by the sight of her.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE contrast of the state of happiness between the two brothers was nearly resembled by that of the two cousins—the riches of young William did not render him happy, nor did the poverty of young Henry doom him to misery. His affectionate heart, as he had described in his letter to Rebecca, loved *persons* rather than *things* ; and he would not have exchanged the society of his father, nor the prospect

of her hand and heart, for all the wealth and splendour of which his cousin William was the master.

He was right. Young William, though he viewed with contempt Henry's inferior state, was far less happy than he. His marriage had been the very counterpart of his father's; and having no child to create affection to his home, his study was the only relief from that domestic incumbrance called his wife: and though, by unremitting application there (joined to the influence of the potent relations of the woman he hated), he at length arrived at the summit of his ambitious desires, still they poorly repaid him for the sacrifice he had made in early life of every tender disposition.

Striding through a list of rapid advancements in the profession of the law, at the age of thirty-eight he found himself raised to a preferment such as rarely falls to the share of a man of his short experience—he found himself invested with a judge's robe; and, gratified by the exalted office, curbed more than ever that aversion which her want of charms or sympathy had produced against the partner of his honours.

While William had thus been daily rising in fortune's favour poor Agnes had been daily sinking deeper and deeper under fortune's frowns: till at last she became a midnight wanderer through the streets of London, soliciting, or rudely demanding money of the passing stranger. Sometimes, hunted by the watch, she affrighted fled from street to street, from portico to portico—and once, unknowing in her fear which way she hurried, she found her trembling knees had sunk, and her wearied head was reclined against the stately pillars that guarded William's door.


At the sudden recollection where she was, a swell of passion, composed of horror, of anger, of despair,

and love, gave re-animated strength to her failing limbs ; and, regardless of her pursuers' steps, she ran to the centre of the street, and, looking up to the windows of the mansion, cried, " Ah ! there he sleeps in quiet, in peace, in ease—he does not even dream of me—he does not care how the cold pierces, or how the people persecute me ! He does not thank me for all the lavish love I have borne him and his child ! His heart is so hard, he does not even recollect that it was he who brought me to ruin."

Had these miseries, common to the unhappy prostitute, been alone the punishment of Agnes—had her crimes and sufferings ended in distress like this, her story had not perhaps been selected for a public recital ; for it had been no other than the customary history of thousands of her sex. But Agnes had a destiny yet more fatal. Unhappily, she was endowed with a mind so sensibly alive to every joy, and every sorrow, to every mark of kindness, every token of severity, so liable to excess in passion, that, once perverted, there was no degree of error from which it would revolt.

Taught by the conversation of the dissolute poor, with whom she now associated, or by her own observation on the worldly reward of elevated villany, she began to suspect " that dishonesty was only held a sin, to secure the property of the rich ; and that, to take from those who did not want, by the art of stealing, was less guilt, than to take from those who did want, by the power of the law."

By false yet seducing opinions such as these, her reason estranged from every moral and religious tie, her necessities urgent, she reluctantly accepted the proposal to mix with a band of practised sharpers and robbers, and became an accomplice in negotiating bills forged on a country banker.



But though ingenious in arguments to excuse the deed before its commission, in the act she had ever the dread of some incontrovertible statement on the other side of the question. Intimidated by this apprehension, she was the veriest bungler in her vile profession—and on the alarm of being detected, while every one of her confederates escaped and absconded, she alone was seized—was arrested for issuing notes they had fabricated, and committed to the provincial jail, about fifty miles from London, where the crime had been perpetrated, to take her trial for—life or death.

CHAPTER XL.

THE day at length is come, on which Agnes shall have a sight of her beloved William !—She who has watched for hours near his door, to procure a glimpse of him going out, or returning home ; who has walked miles to see his chariot pass : she now will behold him, and he will see her by command of the laws of their country. Those laws, which will deal with rigour towards her, are in this one instance still indulgent.

The time of the assizes, at the county-town in which she is imprisoned, is arrived—the prisoners are demanded at the shire-hall—the jail doors are opened—they go in sad procession ;—the trumpet sounds—it speaks the arrival of the judge—and that judge is William.

The day previous to her trial, Agnes had read, in the printed calendar of the prisoners, his name as the learned justice before whom she was to appear. For a moment she forgot her perilous state in the excess of joy which the still unconquerable love

she bore to him permitted her to taste even on the brink of the grave! After-reflection made her check those worldly transports, as unfit for the present solemn occasion. But alas! to her, earth and William were so closely united that, till she forsook the one, she could never cease to think, without the contending passions of hope, of fear, of joy, of love, of shame, and of despair, on the other.

Now fear took place of her first immoderate joy—she feared, that although much changed in person since he had seen her, and her real name now added to many an *alias*—yet she feared that some well-known glance of the eye, turn of the action, or accent of speech, might recal her to his remembrance; and at that idea shame overcame all her other sensations—for still she retained pride, in respect to *his* opinion, to wish him not to know Agnes was that wretch she felt she was! Once a ray of hope beamed on her, “that if he knew her, if he recognised her, he might possibly befriend her cause;” and life bestowed through William’s friendship seemed a precious object! But again, that rigorous honour she had often heard him boast, that firmness to his word, of which she had fatal experience, taught her to know, he would not for any improper compassion, any unmanly weakness, forfeit his oath of impartial justice.

In meditations such as these she passed the sleepless night.

When, in the morning, she was brought to the bar, and her guilty hand held up before the righteous judgment seat of William—imagination could not form two figures, or two situations more incompatible with the existence of former familiarity, than the judge and the culprit—and yet, these very persons had passed together the most blissful moments that either ever tasted! Those hours of tender dal-

liance were now present to *her* mind. *His* thoughts were more nobly employed in his high office ; nor could the haggard face, hollow eye, desponding countenance, and meagre person of the poor prisoner, once call to his memory, though her name was uttered among a list of others which she had assumed, his former youthful, lovely Agnes !

She heard herself arraigned, with trembling limbs and downcast looks ; and many witnesses had appeared against her, before she ventured to lift her eyes up to her awful judge. She then gave one fearful glance, and discovered William, unpitying but beloved William, in every feature ! It was a face she had been used to look on with delight, and a kind of absent smile of gladness now beamed on her poor wan visage.

When every witness on the part of the prosecutor had been examined, the judge addressed himself to her—

“ What defence have you to make ? ”

It was William spoke to Agnes ! The sound was sweet ; the voice was mild, was soft, compassionate, encouraging ! It almost charmed her to a love of life !—not such a voice as when William last addressed her ; when he left her undone and pregnant, vowing never to see or speak to her more.

She could have hung upon the present words for ever ! She did not call to mind that this gentleness was the effect of practice, the art of his occupation ; which, at times, is but a copy, by the unfeeling, from his benevolent brethren of the bench. In the present judge, tenderness was not designed for the consolation of the culprit, but for the approbation of the auditors.

There were no spectators, Agnes, by your side when last he parted from you : if there had, the awful William had been awed to marks of pity.

Stunned with the enchantment of that well-known tongue directed to her, she stood like one just petrified—all vital power seemed suspended.

Again he put the question, and with these additional sentences, tenderly and emphatically delivered—"Recollect yourself. Have you no witnesses? No proof in your behalf?"

A dead silence followed these questions.

He then mildly, but forcibly, added—"What have you to say?"

Here, a flood of tears burst from her eyes, which she fixed earnestly upon him, as if pleading for mercy, while she faintly articulated,

"Nothing, my lord."

After a short pause, he asked her, in the same forcible but benevolent tone,

"Have you no one to speak to your character?"

The prisoner answered,

"No."

A second gush of tears followed this reply, for she called to mind by *whom* her character had first been blasted.

He summed up the evidence; and every time he was compelled to press hard upon the proofs against her, she shrunk, and seemed to stagger with the deadly blow; writhed under the weight of *his* minute justice, more than from the prospect of a shameful death.

The jury consulted but a few minutes. The verdict was—

"Guilty."

She heard it with composure.

But when William placed the fatal velvet on his head, and rose to pronounce her sentence, she started with a kind of convulsive motion; retreated a step or two back, and, lifting up her hands, with a scream exclaimed—

“ Oh ! not from *you* ! ”

The piercing shriek which accompanied these words prevented their being heard by part of the audience ; and those who heard them thought little of their meaning, more than that they expressed her fear of dying.

Serene and dignified, as if no such exclamation had been uttered, William delivered the fatal speech, ending with, “ Dead, dead, dead.”

She fainted as he closed the period, and was carried back to prison in a swoon ; while he adjourned the court to go to dinner.

CHAPTER XLI.

IF, unaffected by the scene he had witnessed, William sat down to dinner with an appetite, let not the reader conceive that the most distant suspicion had struck his mind, of his ever having seen, much less familiarly known, the poor offender whom he had just condemned. Still this forgetfulness did not proceed from the want of memory for Agnes. In every peevish or heavy hour passed with his wife, he was sure to think of her : yet it was self-love, rather than love of *her*, that gave rise to these thoughts : he felt the lack of female sympathy and tenderness, to soften the fatigue of studious labour ; to sooth a sullen, a morose disposition—he felt he wanted comfort for himself, but never once considered what were the wants of Agnes.

In the chagrin of a barren bed, he sometimes thought, too, even on the child that Agnes bore him ; but whether it were male or female, whether a beggar in the streets, or dead—various and important public occupations forbade him to waste time to inquire. Yet the poor, the widow, and the orphan,

frequently shared William's ostentatious bounty. He was the president of many excellent charities; gave largely; and sometimes instituted benevolent societies for the unhappy; for he delighted to load the poor with obligations, and the rich with praise.

There are persons like him, who love to do every good, but that which their immediate duty requires. There are servants who will serve every one more cheerfully than their masters: there are men who will distribute money liberally to all, except their creditors; and there are wives who will love all mankind better than their husbands. *Duty* is a familiar word which has little effect upon an ordinary mind; and as ordinary minds make a vast majority, we have acts of generosity, valour, self-denial, and bounty, where smaller pains would constitute greater virtues. Had William followed the *common* dictates of charity; had he adopted private pity, instead of public munificence; had he cast an eye at home, before he sought abroad for objects of compassion, Agnes had been preserved from an ignominious death, and he had been preserved from—*Remorse*—the tortures of which he for the first time proved, on reading a printed sheet of paper, accidentally thrown in his way, a few days after he had left the town in which he had condemned her to die.

“ March the 12th, 179—

“ The last dying words, speech, and confession; birth, parentage, and education; life, character, and behaviour, of Agnes Primrose, who was executed this morning, between the hours of ten and twelve, pursuant to the sentence passed upon her by the Honourable Justice Norwynne.

“ AGNES PRIMROSE was born of honest parents, in the village of Anfield, in the county of

——” [William started at the name of the village and county]; “but being led astray by the arts and flattery of seducing man, she fell from the paths of virtue, and took to bad company, which instilled into her young heart all their evil ways, and at length brought her to this untimely end. So she hopes her death will be a warning to all young persons of her own sex, how they listen to the praises and courtship of young men, especially of those who are their betters; for they only court to deceive. But the said Agnes freely forgives all persons who have done her injury, or given her sorrow, from the young man who first won her heart, to the jury who found her guilty, and the judge who condemned her to death.

“And she acknowledges the justice of her sentence, not only in respect of the crime for which she suffers, but in regard to many other heinous sins of which she has been guilty, more especially that of once attempting to commit a murder upon her own helpless child, for which guilt she now considers the vengeance of God has overtaken her, to which she is patiently resigned, and departs in peace and charity with all the world, praying the Lord to have mercy on her parting soul.”

“POSTSCRIPT TO THE CONFESSION.

“So great was this unhappy woman’s terror of death, and the awful judgment that was to follow, that when sentence was pronounced upon her, she fell into a swoon, from that into convulsions, from which she never entirely recovered, but was delirious to the time of her execution, except that short interval in which she made her confession to the clergyman who attended her. She has left one child, a youth about sixteen, who has never forsaken his

mother during all the time of her imprisonment, but waited on her with true filial duty ; and no sooner was her fatal sentence passed, than he began to droop, and now lies dangerously ill near the prison from which she is released by death. During the loss of her senses, the said Agnes Primrose raved continually on this child ; and, asking for pen, ink, and paper, wrote an incoherent petition to the judge, recommending the youth to his protection and mercy. But notwithstanding this insanity, she behaved with composure and resignation, when the fatal morning arrived in which she was to be launched into eternity. She prayed devoutly during the last hour, and seemed to have her whole mind fixed on the world to which she was going. A crowd of spectators followed her to the fatal spot, most of whom returned weeping at the recollection of the fervency with which she prayed, and the impression which her dreadful state seemed to make upon her."

* * * * *

No sooner had the name of "Anfield" struck William, than a thousand reflections and remembrances flashed on his mind to give him full conviction, whom it was he had judged and sentenced. He recollected the sad remains of Agnes, such as he once had known her ; and now he wondered how his thoughts could have been absent from an object so pitiable, so worthy of his attention, as not to give him even a suspicion who she was, either from her name, or from her person, during the whole trial !

But wonder, astonishment, horror, and every other sensation was absorbed by—*Remorse*:—it wounded, it stabbed, it rent his hard heart, as it would do a tender one. It havocked on his firm inflexible mind, as it would on a weak and pliant brain !—

Spirit of Agnès! look down, and behold all your wrongs revenged! William feels—*Remorse.*

CHAPTER XLII.

A FEW momentary cessations from the pangs of a guilty conscience were given to William, as soon as he had dispatched a messenger to the jail in which Agnes had been confined, to inquire after the son she had left behind, and to give orders that immediate care should be taken of him. He likewise charged the messenger to bring back the petition she had addressed to him during her supposed insanity; for he now experienced no trivial consolation in the thought, that he might possibly have it in his power to grant her a request.

The messenger returned with the written paper, which had been considered by the persons to whom she had intrusted it, as the distracted dictates of an insane mind; but proved to William, beyond a doubt, that she was perfectly in her senses.

“ TO LORD CHIEF JUSTICE NORWYNNE.

“ MY LORD,

“ I am Agnes Primrose, the daughter of John and Hannah Primrose, of Anfield. My father and mother lived by the hill at the side of the little brook where you used to fish, and so first saw me.

“ Pray, my lord, have mercy on my sorrows: pity me for the first time, and spare my life. I know I have done wrong—I know it is presumption in me to dare to apply to you, such a wicked and mean wretch as I am; but, my lord, you once condescend-

ed to take notice of me—and though I have been very wicked since that time, yet if you would be so merciful as to spare my life, I promise to amend it for the future. But if you think it proper I should die, I will be resigned; but then I hope, I beg, I supplicate, that you will grant my other petition.—Pray, pray, my lord, if you cannot pardon me, be merciful to the child I leave behind. What he will do when I am gone, I don't know—for I have been the only friend he has had ever since he was born. He was born, my lord, about sixteen years ago, at Anfield, one summer's morning, and carried by your cousin, Mr. Henry Norwynne, to Mr. Rymer's, the curate there—and I swore whose child he was, before the dean, and I did not take a false oath. Indeed, indeed, my lord, I did not.

“I will say no more for fear this should not come safe to your hand, for the people treat me as if I were mad—so I will say no more, only this, that, whether I live or die, I forgive every body, and I hope every body will forgive me; and I pray that God will take pity on my son, if you refuse: but I hope you will not refuse.

“AGNES PRIMROSE.”

William rejoiced, as he laid down the petition, that she had asked a favour he could bestow; and hoped by his protection of the son, to redress, in some degree, the wrongs he had done the mother. He instantly sent for the messenger into his apartment, and impatiently asked, “If he had seen the boy, and given proper directions for his care.”

“I have given directions, Sir, for his funeral.”

“How!” cried William.

“He pined away ever since his mother was confined, and died two days after her execution.”

Robbed, by this news, of his only gleam of con-

solation—in the consciousness of having done a mortal injury for which he never now by any means could atone, he saw all his honours, all his riches, all his proud selfish triumphs fade before him! They seemed like airy nothings, which in rapture he would exchange for the peace of a tranquil conscience!

He envied Agnes the death to which he first exposed, then condemned her: he envied her even the life she struggled through from his neglect, and felt that his future days would be far less happy than her former existence. He calculated with precision.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE progressive rise of William, and fall of Agnes, had now occupied nearly the term of eighteen years. Added to these, another year elapsed before the younger Henry completed the errand on which his heart was fixed and returned to England. Shipwreck, imprisonment, and other ills to which the poor and unfriended traveller is peculiarly exposed, detained the father and son in various remote regions until the present period; and, for the last fifteen years, denied them the means of all correspondence with their own country.

The elder Henry was now past sixty years of age, and the younger almost beyond the prime of life. Still length of time had not diminished, but rather had increased, their anxious longings for their native home.

The sorrows, disappointments, and fatigues which throughout these tedious years were endured by the two Henrys are of that dull monotonous kind of suffering, better omitted than described—mere repe-

titions of the exile's woe, that shall give place to the transporting joy of return from banishment! Yet, often as the younger had reckoned, with impatient wishes, the hours which were passed distant from her he loved, no sooner was his disastrous voyage at an end, no sooner had his feet trod upon the shore of Britain, than a thousand wounding fears made him almost doubt whether it were happiness or misery he had obtained by his arrival. If Rebecca were living, he knew it must be happiness; for his heart dwelt with confidence on her faith—her unchanging sentiments. “But death might possibly have ravished from his hopes what no mortal power could have done.” And thus the lover creates a rival in every ill, rather than suffer his fears to remain inanimate.

The elder Henry had less to fear or to hope than his son; yet he both feared and hoped with a sensibility that gave him great anxiety. He hoped his brother would receive him with kindness, after his long absence, and once more take his son cordially to his favour. He longed impatiently to behold his brother; to see his nephew; nay, in the ardour of the renewed affection he just now felt, he thought even a distant view of Lady Clementina would be grateful to his sight! But still, well remembering the pomp, the state, the pride of William, he could not rely on *his* affection, so much he knew that it depended on external circumstances to excite or to extinguish his love. Not that he feared an absolute repulsion from his brother; but he feared, what, to a delicate mind, is still worse—reserved manners, cold looks, absent sentences, and all that cruel retinue of indifference, with which those who are beloved, so often wound the bosom that adores them.

By inquiring of their countrymen (whom they met as they approached to the end of their voyage)

concerning their relation the dean, the two Henrys learned that he was well, and had for some years past been exalted to the bishoprick of ***. This news gave them joy, while it increased their fear of not receiving an affectionate welcome.

The younger Henry, on his landing, wrote immediately to his uncle, acquainting him with his father's arrival in the most abject state of poverty: he addressed his letter to the bishop's country residence, where he knew, as it was the summer season, he would certainly be. He and his father then set off on foot, towards that residence—a palace!

The bishop's palace was not situated above fifty miles from the port where they had landed: and at a small inn about three miles from the bishop's, they proposed (as the letter to him intimated) to wait for his answer, before they intruded into his presence.

As they walked on their solitary journey, it was some small consolation that no creature knew them.

"To be poor and ragged, father," the younger smilingly said, "is no disgrace, no shame, thank Heaven, where the object is not known."

"True, my son," replied Henry: "and perhaps I feel myself much happier now, unknowing and unknown to all but you, than I shall in the presence of my fortunate brother and his family; for there, confusion at my ill success through life may give me greater pain, than even my misfortunes have inflicted."

After uttering this reflection which had preyed upon his mind, he sat down on the road side to rest his agitated limbs, before he could proceed farther. His son reasoned with him—gave him courage; and now his hopes preponderated, till after two days' journey, on arriving at the inn where an answer from

the bishop was expected, no letter, no message had been left.

"He means to renounce us," said Henry trembling, and whispering to his son.

Without disclosing to the people of the house who they were, or from whom the letter or the message they inquired for was to have come, they retired, and consulted what steps they were now to pursue.

Previously to his writing to the bishop, the younger Henry's heart, all his inclinations, had swayed him towards a visit to the village in which was his uncle's former country seat; the beloved village of Anfield, but, respect to him and duty to his father, had made him check those wishes: now they revived again, and with the image of Rebecca before his eyes, he warmly entreated his father to go with him to Anfield, at present only thirty miles distant, and thence write once more—then again wait the will of his uncle.

The father consented to this proposal, even glad to postpone the visit to his dignified brother.

After a scanty repast, such as they had been long inured to, they quitted the inn, and took the road towards Anfield.

CHAPTER XLIV.

It was about five in the afternoon of a summer's day, that Henry and his son left the sign of the Mermaid, to pursue their third day's journey: the young man's spirits elated with the prospect of the reception he should meet from Rebecca: the elder dejected, at not having received a speedy welcome from his brother.

The road which led to Anfield by the shortest course, of necessity took our travellers within sight of the bishop's palace. The turrets appeared at a distance; and on the sudden turn round the corner of a large plantation, the whole magnificent structure was at once exhibited before his brother's astonished eyes! He was struck with the grandeur of the habitation; and, totally forgetting all the unkind, the contemptuous treatment he had ever received from its owner (like the same Henry in his earlier years), smiled with a kind of transport "that William was so great a man."

After this first joyous sensation was over, "Let us go a little nearer, my son," said he; "no one will see us, I hope: or, if they should, you can run and conceal yourself; and not a creature will know *me*: even my brother would not know me thus altered; and I wish to take a little farther view of his fine house, and all his pleasure grounds."

Young Henry, though impatient to be gone, would not object to his father's desire. They walked forward between a shady grove and a purling rivulet, snuffed in odours from the jessamine banks, and listened to the melody of an adjoining aviary.

The allurements of the spot seemed to enchain the elder Henry, and he at length sauntered to the very avenue of the dwelling: but just as he had set his daring yet trembling feet upon the turf which led to the palace gates, he suddenly stopped, on hearing, as he thought, the village-clock strike seven; which reminded him, that evening drew on, and it was time to go. He listened again, when he and his son, both together, said, "It is the toll of the bell before some funeral."

The signals of death, while they humble the rich, inspire the poor with pride. The passing-bell gave Henry a momentary sense of equality; and he

courageously stepped forward to the first winding of the avenue.

He started back at the sight which presented itself!

A hearse—mourning coaches—mutes—plumed horses—with every other token of the person's importance, who was going to be committed to the earth.

Scarcely had his terrified eyes been thus unexpectedly struck, when a coffin borne by six men issued from the gates, and was deposited in the waiting receptacle; while gentlemen in mourning went into the different coaches.

A standard-bearer now appeared with an escutcheon, on which the keys and mitre were displayed. Young Henry, upon this, pathetically exclaimed, "My uncle! it is my uncle's funeral!"

Henry, his father, burst into tears.

The procession moved along.

The two Henrys, the only real mourners in the train, followed at a little distance—in rags, but in tears.

The elder Henry's heart was nearly bursting: he longed to clasp the dear remains of his brother, without the dread of being spurned for his presumption. He now could no longer remember him either as the dean or bishop; but, leaping over that whole interval of pride and arrogance, called only to his memory William, such as he knew him when they lived at home together, together walked to London, and there together almost perished for want.

They arrived at the church; and, while the coffin was placing in the dreary vault, the weeping brother crept slowly after to the hideous spot. His reflections now fixed on a different point. "Is this possible?" said he to himself. "Is this the dean, whom I ever feared? Is this the bishop, of whom



within the present hour I stood in awe? Is this William, whose every glance struck me with his superiority? Alas, my brother! and is this horrid abode the reward for all your aspiring efforts? Are these sepulchral trappings the only testimonies of your greatness, which you exhibit to me on my return? Did you foresee an end like this, while you treated me, and many more of your youthful companions, with haughtiness and contempt; while you thought it becoming of your dignity to shun and despise us? Where is the difference now, between my departed wife and you? or, if there be a difference, she, perchance, has the advantage.—Ah, my poor brother! for distinction in the other world, I trust, some of your anxious labours have been employed; for you are now of less importance in this than when you and I first left our native town, and hoped for nothing greater than to be suffered to exist.”

On their quitting the church, they inquired of the by-standers the immediate cause of the bishop's death, and heard he had been suddenly carried off by a raging fever.

Young Henry inquired “if Lady Clementina was at the palace, or Mr. Norwynne?”

“The latter is there,” he was answered by a poor woman; “but Lady Clementina has been dead these four years.”

“Dead! dead!” cried young Henry. “That worldly woman! quitted this world for ever!”

“Yes,” answered the stranger: “she caught cold by wearing a new-fashioned dress that did not half cover her, wasted all away, and died the miserablest object you ever heard of.”

The person who gave this melancholy intelligence concluded it with a hearty laugh; which would have surprised the two hearers, if they had not before observed, that amongst all the village crowd that

attended to see this solemn show, not one afflicted countenance appeared, not one dejected look, not one watery eye. The pastor was scarcely known to his flock; it was in London that his meridian lay, at the levee of ministers, at the table of peers, at the drawing-rooms of the great; and now his neglected parishioners paid his indifference in kind.

The ceremony over, and the mourning suite departed, the spectators dispersed with gibes and jeering faces from the sad spot; while the Henrys, with heavy hearts, retraced their steps back towards the palace. In their way, at the crossing of a stile, they met a poor labourer returning from his day's work; who, looking earnestly at the throng of persons who were leaving the church-yard, said to the elder Henry,

"Pray, master, what are all them folk gathered together about? What's the matter there?"

"There has been a funeral," replied Henry.

"Oh, zooks! what! a burying!—ay, now I see it is; and I warrant, of our old bishop—I heard he was main ill. It is he they have been putting into the ground! is not it?"

"Yes," said Henry.

"Why then so much the better."

"The better!" cried Henry.

"Yes, master; though I should be loath to be where he is now."

Henry started—"He was your pastor, man!"

"Ha! ha! ha! I should be sorry that my master's sheep, that are feeding yonder, should have no better pastor—the fox would soon get them all."

"You surely did not know him!"

"Not much, I can't say I did; for he was above speaking to poor folks, unless they did any mischief—and then he was sure to take notice of them."

"I believe he meant well," said Henry.

"As to what he meant, God only knows; but I know what he *did*."

"And what did he?"

"Nothing at all for the poor."

"If any of them applied to him, no doubt ——"

"Oh! they knew better than all that comes to; for if they asked for any thing, he was sure to have them sent to bridewell, or the workhouse. He used to say, '*The workhouse was a fine place for a poor man—the food good enough, and enough of it;*' yet he kept a dainty table himself. His dogs, too, fared better than we poor. He was vastly tender and good to all his horses and dogs, I *will* say that for him; and to all brute beasts: he would not suffer them to be either starved or struck—but he had no compassion for his fellow-creatures."

"I am sensible you do him wrong."

"That *he* is the best judge of by this time. He has sent many a poor man to the house of correction; and now 'tis well if he has not got a place there himself. Ha, ha, ha!"

The man was walking away, when Henry called to him—"Pray can you tell me if the bishop's son be at the palace?"

"Oh, yes! you'll find master there treading in the old man's shoes, as proud as Lucifer."

"Has he any children?"

"No, thank God! There's been enow of the name; and after the son is gone, I hope we shall have no more of the breed."

"Is Mrs. Norwynne, the son's wife, at the palace?"

"What, master! did not you know what's become of her?"

"Any accident? ——"

"Ha, ha, ha! yes. I can't help laughing—why, master, she made a mistake, and went to another

man's bed—and so her husband and she were parted—and she has married the other man.”

“ Indeed !” cried Henry, amazed.

“ Ay, indeed ; but if it had been my wife or yours, the bishop would have made her do penance in a white sheet : but as it was a lady, why, it was all very well—and any one of us, that had been known to talk about it, would have been sent to bridewell straight. But we *did* talk, notwithstanding.”

The malicious joy with which the peasant told this story made Henry believe (more than all the complaints the man uttered) that there had been want of charity and Christian deportment in the whole conduct of the bishop's family. He almost wished himself back on his savage island, where brotherly love could not be less than it appeared to be in this civilised country.

CHAPTER XLV.

As Henry and his son, after parting from the poor labourer, approached the late bishop's palace, all the charms of its magnificence, its situation, which, but a few hours before, had captivated the elder Henry's mind, were vanished ; and, from the mournful ceremony he had since been witness of, he now viewed this noble edifice but as a heap of rubbish piled together to fascinate weak understandings ; and to make even the wise and religious man, at times, forget why he was sent into this world.

Instead of presenting themselves to their nephew and cousin, they both felt an unconquerable reluctance to enter under the superb, the melancholy roof. —A bank, a hedge, a tree, a hill, seemed, at this

junction, a pleasanter shelter : and each felt himself happy in being a harmless wanderer on the face of the earth, rather than living in splendour, while the wants, the revilings of the hungry and the naked, were crying to Heaven for vengeance.

They gave a heart-felt sigh to the vanity of the rich and the powerful ; and pursued a path where they hoped to meet with virtue and happiness.

They arrived at Anfield.

Possessed by apprehensions, which his uncle's funeral had served to increase, young Henry, as he entered the well-known village, feared every sound he heard would convey information of Rebecca's death. He saw the parsonage house at a distance, but dreaded to approach it, lest Rebecca should no longer be an inhabitant. His father indulged him in the wish to take a short survey of the village, and rather learn by indirect means, by observation, his fate, than hear it all at once from the lips of some blunt relater.

Anfield had undergone great changes since Henry left it. He found some cottages built where formerly there were none ; and some were no more, where he had frequently called, and held short conversations with the poor who dwelt in them. Amongst the latter number was the house of the parents of Agnes—fallen to the ground ! He wondered to himself where that poor family had taken up their abode. Henry, in a kinder world !

He once again cast a look at the old parsonage house : his inquisitive eye informed him, there no alteration had taken place externally ; but he feared what change might be within.

At length he obtained the courage to enter the church-yard in his way to it. As he slowly and tremblingly moved along, he stopped to read here

and there a gravestone ; as mild, instructive, conveyers of intelligence, to which he could attend with more resignation, than to any other reporter.

The second stone he came to he found was erected *To the memory of the Reverend Thomas Rymer*, Rebecca's father. He instantly called to mind all that poor curate's quick sensibility of wrong, towards *himself* ; his unbridled rage in consequence ; and smiled to think—how trivial now appeared all for which he gave way to such excess of passion !

But, shocked at the death of one so near to her he loved, he now feared to read on ; and cast his eyes from the tombs accidentally to the church. Through the window of the chancel, his sight was struck with a tall monument of large dimensions, raised since his departure, and adorned with the finest sculpture. His curiosity was excited—he drew near, and he could distinguish (followed by elegant poetic praise) “ *To the memory of John Lord Viscount Bendaam.* ”

Notwithstanding the solemn, melancholy, anxious bent of Henry's mind, he could not read these words, and behold this costly fabric, without indulging a momentary fit of indignant laughter.

“ Are sculpture and poetry thus debased,” he cried, “ to perpetuate the memory of a man whose best advantage is to be forgotten ; whose no one action merits record, but as an example to be shunned ? ”

An elderly woman, leaning on her staff, now passed along the lane by the side of the church. The younger Henry accosted her, and ventured to inquire “ where the daughters of Mr. Rymer, since his death, were gone to live ? ”

“ We live,” she returned, “ in that small cottage across the clover field.”

Henry looked again, and thought he had mistaken the word *we*; for he felt assured that he had no knowledge of the person to whom he spoke.

But she knew him, and, after a pause, cried—
“ Ah! Mr. Henry, you are welcome back. I am heartily glad to see you—and my poor sister Rebecca will go out of her wits with joy.”

“ Is Rebecca living, and will be glad to see me?” he eagerly asked, while tears of rapture trickled down his face. “ Father,” he continued in his ecstasy, “ we are now come home to be completely happy; and I feel as if all the years I have been away were but a short week; and as if all the dangers I have passed had been light as air. But is it possible,” he cried, to his kind informer, “ that you are one of Rebecca’s sisters?”

Well might he ask; for, instead of the blooming woman of seven-and-twenty he had left her, her colour was gone, her teeth impaired, her voice broken. She was near fifty.

“ Yes, I am one of Mr. Rymer’s daughters,” she replied.

“ But which?” said Henry.

“ The eldest, and once called the prettiest,” she returned: “ though now people tell me I am altered; yet I cannot say I see it myself.”

“ And are you all living?” Henry inquired.

“ All but one: she married and died. The other three, on my father’s death, agreed to live together, and knit or spin for our support. So we took that small cottage, and furnished it with some of the parsonage furniture, as you shall see; and kindly welcome I am sure you will be to all it affords, though that is but little.”

As she was saying this, she led him through the clover field towards the cottage. His heart re-

bounded with joy that Rebecca was there: yet, as he walked, he shuddered at the impression which he feared the first sight of her would make. He feared, what he imagined (till he had seen this change in her sister) he should never heed. He feared Rebecca would look no longer young. He was not yet so far master over all his sensual propensities, as, when the trial came, to think he could behold her look like her sister, and not give some evidence of his disappointment.

His fears were vain. On entering the gate of their little garden, Rebecca rushed from the house to meet them, just the same Rebecca as ever.

It was her mind, which, beaming on her face, and actuating her every motion, had ever constituted all her charms: it was her mind, which had gained her Henry's affection. That mind had undergone no change; and she was the self-same woman he had left her.

He was entranced with joy.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE fare which the Henrys partook at the cottage of the female Rymers, was such as the sister had described—mean, and even scanty; but this did not in the least diminish the happiness they received in meeting, for the first time since their arrival in England, human beings who were glad to see them.

At a stinted repast of milk and vegetables, by the glimmering light of a little brush-wood on the hearth, they yet could feel themselves comparatively blest, while they listened to the recital of afflictions which had befallen persons around that

very neighbourhood, for whom every delicious viand had been procured to gratify the taste, every art devised to delight the other senses.

It was by the side of this glimmering fire, that Rebecca and her sisters told the story of poor Agnes's fate, and of the thorn it had for ever planted in William's bosom—of his reported sleepless, perturbed nights; and his gloomy, or half-distracted days; when, in the fulness of *remorse*, he has complained—"of a guilty conscience! of the weariness attached to continued prosperity! the misery of wanting an object of affection!"

They told of Lord Bendham's death from the effects of intemperance; from a mass of blood infected by high-seasoned dishes, mixed with copious draughts of wine—repletion of food and liquor, not less fatal, to the existence of the rich, than the want of common sustenance to the lives of the poor.

They told of Lady Bendham's ruin since her lord's death, by gaming. They told, "that now she suffered beyond the pain of common indigence, by the cutting triumph of those whom she had formerly despised."

They related (what has been told before) the divorce of William, and the marriage of his wife with a libertine; the decease of Lady Clementina, occasioned by that incorrigible vanity which even old age could not subdue.

After numerous other examples had been recited of the dangers, the evils that riches draw upon their owner; the elder Henry rose from his chair, and, embracing Rebecca and his son, said,

"How much indebted are *we* to Providence, my children, who, while it inflicts poverty, bestows peace of mind; and in return for the trivial grief we meet in this world, holds out to our longing hopes the reward of the next!"

Not only resigned, but happy in their station, with hearts made cheerful rather than dejected by attentive meditation, Henry and his son planned the means of their future support, independent of their kinsman William—nor only of him, but of every person and thing but their own industry.

“While I have health and strength,” cried the old man, and his son’s looks acquiesced in all the father said, “I will not take from any one in affluence what only belongs to the widow, the fatherless, and the infirm; for to such alone, by Christian laws—however custom may subvert them—the overplus of the rich is due.”

CHAPTER XLVII.

By forming an humble scheme for their remaining life, a scheme depending upon their *own* exertions alone, on no light promises of pretended friends, and on no sanguine hopes of certain success, but with prudent apprehension, with fortitude against disappointment, Henry, his son, and Rebecca (now his daughter), found themselves, at the end of one year, in the enjoyment of every comfort which such distinguished minds knew how to taste.

Exempt both from patronage and from controul—healthy—alive to every fruition with which Nature blesses the world; dead to all out of their power to attain, the works of art—susceptible of those passions which endear human creatures one to another, insensible to those which separate man from man—they found themselves the thankful inhabitants of a small house or hut, placed on the borders of the sea.

Each morning wakes the father and the son to

cheerful labour in fishing, or the tending of a garden the produce of which they carry to the next market town. The evening sends them back to their home in joy: where Rebecca meets them at the door, affectionately boasts of the warm meal that is ready, and heightens the charm of conversation with her taste and judgment.

It was after a supper of roots from their garden, poultry that Rebecca's hand had reared, and a jug brewed by young Henry, that the following discourse took place.

"My son," said the elder Henry, "where, under heaven, shall three persons be met together, happy as we three are? It is the want of industry, or the want of reflection, which makes the poor dissatisfied. Labour gives a value to rest, which the idle can never taste: and reflection gives to the mind a degree of content, which the unthinking never can know."

"I once," replied the younger Henry, "considered poverty a curse; but after my thoughts became enlarged, and I had associated for years with the rich, and now mix with the poor, my opinion has undergone a total change—for I have seen, and have enjoyed, more real pleasure at work with my fellow-labourers, and in this cottage, than ever I beheld, or experienced, during my abode at my uncle's: during all my intercourse with the fashionable and the powerful of this world."

"The worst is," said Rebecca, "the poor have not always enough."

"Who has enough?" asked her husband. "Had my uncle? No: he hoped for more—and in all his writings sacrificed his duty to his avarice. Had his son enough, when he yielded up his honour, his domestic peace, to gratify his ambition? Had Lady Bendham enough, when she staked all she had, in

the hope of becoming richer & Were we, my Rebecca, of discontented minds, we have now too little. But conscious, from observation and experience, that the rich are not so happy as ourselves, we rejoice in our lot."

The tear of joy which stole from her eye expressed, more than his words, a state of happiness.

He continued: "I remember, when I first came a boy to England, the poor excited my compassion; but now that my judgment is matured, I pity the rich. I know that in this opulent kingdom, there are nearly as many persons perishing through intemperance, as starving with hunger; there are as many miserable in the lassitude of having nothing to do, as there are of those bowed down to the earth with hard labour; there are more persons who draw upon themselves calamity by following their own will, than there are who experience it by obeying the will of another. Add to this, that the rich are so much afraid of dying, they have no comfort in living."

"There the poor have another advantage," said Rebecca; "for they may defy not only death, but every loss by sea or land, as they have nothing to lose."

"Besides," added the elder Henry, "there is a certain joy, of the most gratifying kind that the human mind is capable of tasting, peculiar to the poor; and of which the rich can but seldom experience the delight."

"What can that be?" cried Rebecca.

"A kind word, a benevolent smile, one token of esteem from the person whom we consider as our superior."

To which Rebecca replied, "And the rarity of obtaining such a token is what increases the honour."

"Certainly," returned young Henry; "and yet those in poverty, ungrateful as they are, murmur against that government from which they receive the blessing."

"But this is the fault of education, of early prejudice," said the elder Henry. "Our children observe us pay respect, even reverence, to the wealthy, while we slight or despise the poor. The impression thus made on their minds in youth is indelible during the more advanced periods of life; and they continue to pine after riches, and lament under poverty: nor is the seeming folly wholly destitute of reason; for human beings are not yet so deeply sunk in voluptuous gratification, or childish vanity, as to place delight in any attainment which has not for its end, the love or admiration of their fellow-beings."

"Let the poor then," cried the younger Henry, "no more be their own persecutors—no longer pay homage to wealth—instantaneously the whole idolatrous worship will cease—the idol will be broken."

END OF VOL. XXVII.



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